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ABSTRACT

This document is a practical guide to demonstrating the value of school-to-careers preparation for all students and to debunking outdated stereotypes and false assumptions surrounding school-to-careers and vocational education programs. Part 1 explains the importance of political and policy advocacy in public education and outlines strategies for working with and through elected government representatives to achieve goals for students and educators. Part 2 is a collection of fact sheets, reports, and article clips from American Vocational Association (AVA) publications and other materials useful for waging campaigns about education policy. Included among the materials are information sheets and forms that may be photocopied for distribution to policymakers and the public and fact sheets that may be customized with facts and figures about local vocational and school-to-careers programs. Part 3 is a promotion guide that contains step-by-step instructions for planning promotional campaigns and events to create public support in the community. Appended are five papers and a current catalog of promotional materials available from the AVA. The papers' titles are as follows: "Going to Market?" (Dan Stapleton); "Reputation Management" (Pat Jackson); "News--Not Olds--Gets Attention" (Marty Lenzini Murray); "Coping with Crisis" (Eric Ries); and "What Do People Think of Us?" (MN)

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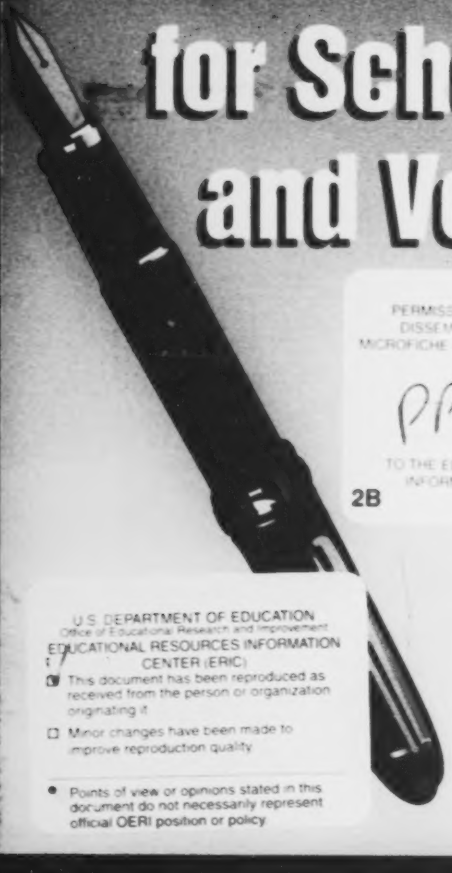
# Making The Case

## for School-to-Careers and Vocational Education



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# Making the Case

## for School-to-Careers and Vocational Education

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Published by the American Vocational Association
1410 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314
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# Introduction

If you use this book as intended it probably will be dogeared not many months after you've purchased it. That's because you'll find good reason to use the book again and again...

- as a reference whenever questions or problems arise in explaining school-to-careers to your various constituencies,
- as a how-to manual for putting together programs and events that sell the concept,
- and for ammunition to fire back at know-nothing and ill-informed people and organizations who would block educational programs that help all students relate what they are learning in school to careers they want to pursue when they graduate.

There are four parts to this book. The first deals with the importance of political and policy advocacy in public education. Face it, to effect changes in schools is no simple task. There is a hierarchy within each school, from school to central office, to the school board, the state department of education, the U.S. Congress and federal education department. Maneuvering through this network requires perseverance, savvy, shoe leather and elbow grease. The material on advocacy shows you how to work with and through your elected government representatives at every level to achieve worthy goals for students and educators.

The second section is a collection of fact sheets, reports, article clips from AVA publications and other material that will arm you for battles over education policy. This is your ammunition. These materials are provided here with permission for you to photocopy them for use as handouts to present to policymakers and at public assemblies. This material will help you make the case for vocational-technical and school-to-careers education. You are encouraged to customize the fact sheets presented here with your own facts and figures about local vocational and school-to-careers programs.

Next there is a promotion guide. This is a step-by-step guide to planning campaigns and events—like career nights and mall booths—to promote the value of vocational studies in the curriculum and to recruit students for vocational programs. This guide has also been part of a package of materials AVA provides to support Voc Ed Week and School-to-Careers Month celebrations around the country. In this planning guide are scores of examples of proven promotional activities.

Finally, there is an appendix in which you will find two valuable resources:

1) a collection of articles reprinted from AVA's *Techniques* magazine. They constitute a soup-to-nuts handbook on education program image enhancement strategies. It's all here—case studies of actual successful marketing programs; a plan for reputation management; an expert's analysis of what makes good news; advice on coping with crisis situations, and a report on results of a national survey of parents on their thoughts about vocational-technical education.

2) a current AVA catalog of promotional materials for use at Voc Ed Week and School-to-Careers Month events and activities. Items with a catchy careers education slogan range from giveaway pens, rulers and key chains to an assortment of on-target information brochures. To assure that you receive future copies of this catalog, with new promotional themes and items, call AVA Product Sales at 800-826-9972 and ask to be put on the catalog mailing list. That's also the number you call to order any of the items in the catalog.

# ADVOCACY

## Why Be an Advocate?

Legislative activities at the federal, state and local levels affect all aspects of vocational-technical education. At the most basic level, lack of support can mean the elimination of programs. Conversely, appropriate funding for vocational-technical education can allow an increase in the number of individuals served by a specific program.

Why get involved in the legislative process? Because the future of vocational-technical education depends on the advocacy of vocational-technical education professionals. They must play an active role in the legislative and regulatory arena to affect federal policy regarding vocational-technical education.

Groups, like the American Vocational Association, derive their influence from the fact that they represent concentrations of voters, also known as constituents. Constituent pressure is a very effective tool. Legislators listen to what their constituents have to say, especially if they are visible and persistent in communicating their cause. After all, these are the people who voted the legislators into office and will vote again in the next election. They do listen to what you have to say. Your grass-roots advocacy efforts can make a difference in future congressional decisions.

## Opportunities for Advocates

The following are some of the actions **you** can take to make a difference in the legislative process:

- AVA Legislative Efforts
- Personal Visits
- Letters/E-mail/Faxes
- Telephone Calls
- Fact Sheets
- Site Visits
- Testimony Presentation
- Coalition Building
- Political Action Committees
- Public Information Campaigns

## Communicating with Your Legislator

One of the most important actions you can take in support of vocational-technical education is to develop rapport with a legislator and his or her staff. Getting to know each other and helping them to understand vocational-techncial education is the most effective way to influence the legislative process. As a vocational-technical education professional, you need to develop an ongoing relationship with your representatives on the school board, city council, county board, in the state legislature and the U.S. Congress.

Members of Congress want to hear from their constituents — and they will listen. Each member must consider a vast number of issues. These issues are divided among staff who are responsible for following legislative activity and constituent support for each of their assigned issues. A staff member may be responsible for 20 or more broad issues and is seldom an expert in all of them. They rely on a multitude of resources to keep them knowledgeable on these issues, including groups like AVA and individuals like you.

Vocational-technical education professionals must be proactive and offer themselves as a resource to legislators and their staff. You are in an excellent position to provide them with information about your programs and how these programs affect the community. Once you have developed a working relationship with them, they will look to you more often and ask for your input as these issues come forward. By establishing yourself as a reliable source of information, you are improving your access to the policymaking system. Keep in mind that it is much easier to ask a friend for something than it is to ask a stranger.

## General Guidelines

Educators' strength lies in their ability to effectively communicate information. This is important in teaching students as well as influencing policy makers. There are many options available for communicating with policy makers: letters, e-mail, faxes, telephone calls and personal visits.

Logic dictates that if you are trying to influence something that is going to happen immediately, e-mail, faxes and phone calls are the best option. However, if you need to provide detailed information and have a longer period in which to work, a personal letter is more likely to get the legislator's attention. Whether you write, call or visit your legislator, there are some basic guidelines that are applicable to all methods of contact. They are:

- Know Your Legislator. Learn as much a possible about legislators and where they stand on issues. How have they voted in the past? What is their political philosophy? Legislators who support your position can help you develop your strategy; those who "don't know" need lots of your attention; and those who are opposed can sometimes be persuaded to change their minds. Never assume what your legislator thinks — find out.
- Identify Yourself. Identify yourself as a constituent by providing your address, location of your school and congressional district. Identify yourself as a vocational-technical education professional and give your area of expertise. In addition, identify yourself as a member of AVA and your state or local group or organization.
- Be Prepared. Know your issue and the impact of the legislation or program you support and the impact it will have on your school, organization or local community, and, if appropriate, on the nation as a whole. Keep abreast of issues through AVA resources and contact AVA if you have any questions. The same is true for state associations in state-level advocacy.
- Be Specific. Be specific and state the action you want the legislator to take: vote in a certain manner, introduce legislation, co-sponsor a bill or make a floor statement. If the member expresses support for your position, hold him or her to that commitment. Whenever possible, refer to a specific piece of legislation or public law by its number.
- Be Concise. Be concise in your written or verbal communications. Legislators and their staff have limited time to devote to any one issue. A one- or two-page fact sheet can summarize your points and is more likely to be read and filed for future reference than a 10-page document. In face-to-face meetings, highlight key issues and leave behind a fact sheet as a reminder of essential points you want the legislator to have at hand.
- Be Constructive. Be pleasant, polite and use a "soft-sell" approach even if a legislator does not agree to support you in a specific instance. If there are problems with a particular program or bill, admit it and identify alternative solutions. Do not threaten or make negative comments. You are looking for a continuing relationship and will probably need the legislator's support on other issues in the future. In the meantime, feel confident that you have shared your information in positive manner.
- Follow Up. Follow legislation throughout the legislative process and be prepared to contact your legislator several times on one issue. You can contact the legislator prior to a committee vote, before a floor vote or when there is a lot of press activity on the issue. Keep the pressure on him or her by your continued contact on the issue.
- Continue Rapport. It is important continue developing rapport with your legislator and his or her staff. In addition to contacting them about specific legislation or issues, it is appropriate to: congratulate them on honors received or elections won; thank them for a positive vote on your issue or an actions taken that are important to the community; or to share positive information about your program.

Legislators appreciate, but seldom receive, thank you letters for actions taken. Be among those who show appreciation for their support.

Sharing an news article or research study on your program with your legislator is an ideal way to promote your program and highlight the impact it has made on the legislator's constituents. This is an easy way to promote your program and continue developing rapport with the legislator. You are also giving them information they can use to justify their support of your program.

## Personal Visits

Personal visits with your legislator are an effective method of grassroots advocacy. These visits often lay the groundwork for future communication with the legislator and his or her staff.

To make your meeting more effective:

- Make Your Appointment In Advance. Call your member's office and request a meeting. Identify who you are, who you represent and who will attend, state the time required (15 - 30 minutes is typical) and the subject you want to discuss. The day before the appointment, call to confirm.
- Be On Time. Everybody's time is valuable. Don't waste it.
- Establish Rapport. After introductions and handshakes, start the meeting with a comment about mutual interests (friends, activity in your community, a recent vote) to tie you or your program to the legislator.
- State Purpose of Your Visit. Tell the legislator who you represent, what you want to talk about and why you are talking with him or her. If you are advocating for a specific bill, be sure to refer to it by number, explain its status and indicate what action you would like the member to take.
- Select a Spokesperson. If there are two or more people going to the appointment, identify a spokesperson who can lead the discussion and ask other members of the group to speak as the discussion moves along.
- Use Your Expertise and Share Success Stories. You are there to share your expertise on the issue you're discussing. Be prepared to share brief anecdotes and success stories to make your point. Be sure to identify how your member's constituents are or will be affected.
- Listen Carefully and Answer Questions Truthfully. Allow the legislator to share his or her insights or positions with you. Though you may not agree with the views expressed, this gives you the chance to respond based on your knowledge and experience. Listen carefully and identify issues of concern to the member. Answer all questions to the best of your ability. If you do not know the answer to a question, say you don't know and promise to find the answer and get back to them.
- Summarize Major Points. Wrap up the meeting by summarizing the major points of discussion and leave behind a fact sheet with your name, address and phone number.
- Leave Promptly. At the end of your allotted time, thank the legislator and his or her staff member for their time and leave promptly.
- Follow Up. Send a thank you letter to the legislator and his or her staff and take the opportunity to once again summarize your main points. If you have promised to send additional information, do so promptly.

## Letters/E-mail/Faxes

Never underestimate the power of a constituent's letter. Letters expressing a given viewpoint can change a legislator's mind and are particularly helpful when that legislator is wavering on an issue. Personalized (even handwritten) letters from constituents, on their own stationery, are the most effective. If the letter needs to be there immediately, consider faxing or using e-mail and mailing the original. It is important that letters be as simple and clear as possible. To make your letter more effective:

- Keep It Short. Limit your letter to one or two pages. Follow the sample letter format provided below.
- Use Appropriate Address and Salutation. Use the correct title, address and salutation and spell each correctly. The following forms of address and salutation are customary when writing to your members of Congress:

**To Senators:**
The Honorable (insert full name)
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator (insert last name):

**To Representatives:**
The Honorable (insert full name)
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative (insert last name)

- Be Positive. Legislators, like most of us, respond best to praise, not criticism. Tell them you supported them in the past (if you did) and how you need their help. It is also appropriate to acknowledge their previous support on this or other issues.
- Ask For a Reply. When they do reply — and they almost always will — write again. Compliment positive actions taken or encourage reconsideration of actions not taken. When a legislator differs from your position, his or her response may include such language as "careful study" or "due consideration" or "keeping your comments in mind." These are often negative indicators and do not show commitment. Write back for clarification. Doing so lets the legislator know that you are not easily misled, are serious about the issue and are following his or her actions carefully.
- Establish Yourself as a Resource. You are an expert in your field and can offer to provide additional information regarding the field, the issue and the impact of proposed legislation. The AVA has materials you can use in this effort.
- Write Neatly. Handwritten letters can be as persuasive as typed letters. But your points must be readable to be understood. Generally, if you are writing in a capacity related to your employment, as an administrator or teacher for example, type the letter. It lends professional credibility. If your letter is part of a letter writing campaign, you can hand write the letter, since it gives the appearance of a grass-roots, "ordinary citizen" response rather than one from a "special interest."

## Telephone Calls

Telephone calls can serve as an emphatic follow-up or a quick way of informing legislators or theirs staffs of your position or wishes. When calling, leave your name, phone number, address and a brief message.

**Sample Letter to a Member of Congress.**

Your Name
Your Address
Date

The Honorable (insert full name)

U.S. House of Representatives or Senate
Office address
Washington, DC (ZIP for Senate is 20510; House, 20515)

Dear Representative or Senator (insert last name):

**INTRODUCTION**

- Identify yourself
- Briefly reference your occupation, business or organization
- Identify your purpose in writing

**PURPOSE OF LETTER**

- Explain why you are writing
- Reference bill by name and/or number, if appropriate
- Give facts, figures, and/or personal experiences and anecdotes that support your position

**CLOSING**

- Request a reply indicating his or her position regarding your request
- Establish yourself as a resource
- Thank the member of Congress for his or her consideration of your position

Sincerely,

(sign your name)

Telephone calls are especially effective during the 48 hours immediately preceding consideration of a bill. Proper timing can increase the power of a telephone call. Staff and legislators can't avoid getting the message from a constantly ringing phone as the time of a decision on a major issue approaches. Hours of steady rings have been known to change the response from "thank you for calling" to "we are definitely backing the proposal."

## Fact Sheets

A fact sheet is an extremely effective way to communicate information about critical and complex issues to legislators and other policymakers. Although fact sheets do not take the place of one-on-one communication, they can reinforce what you say in person and can be left behind or included in a letter as a reminder of essential points that you want the legislator to have at hand.

Almost any subject can be summarized and presented in a manner that focuses attention on the key issues using the fact sheet format. You can prepare persuasive fact sheets that will make your points eloquently and concisely by following these guidelines:

- Focus Your Topic Narrowly. Do not try to communicate everything you would want legislators to know about your vocational programs in one fact sheet. Zero in on one issue for exploration. If you are asking for increased funding, you might prepare a fact sheet that explains why the funding is needed, how it will be used and the benefit that will result to your state or community.

- Organize the Information for Impact. A good fact sheet contains a number of sections organized in a logical sequence. The fact sheet may follow a question-and-answer format or sections may be defined with a series of headings and subheadings. It should be easy for the reader to scan the headings or questions and focus in on certain segments of the fact sheet which are of particular interest.

- Start with a Statement of Purpose. Your fact sheet should always begin with a brief summary statement regarding its purpose.

- Follow up with a Series of Points to Make Your Case. The heart of your fact sheet should defend, reinforce or explain your summary statement.

- Conclude by Telling Readers What Action You Want Them to Take. If you are requesting support of a specific bill, conclude by asking legislators to vote for the bill. If your fact sheet is addressed to voters and you want their support of a specific proposal on the ballot, state specifically how the issue will appear on the ballot and ask for their "yes" vote.

- Keep It Brief. Fact sheets are designed to convey complex material in a concise format. State your purpose briefly. Follow up with the points that support your proposal, each stated succinctly, and conclude with a one-sentence statement of the action you want your readers to take. One, two or four pages are the preferred lengths for fact sheets. The number of pages depends on the amount of information that needs to be presented.

- Strive for a Polished, Professional Look. You do not need to spend a lot of money to achieve an attractive, eye-catching piece. You may want to use colored paper to make your fact sheet stand out from other handouts. You also should use a logo or nameplate that clearly identifies your organization.

- Allow for Follow-Up. Make sure your fact sheet contains the name, address and telephone number of a contact person in case a reader wants to request more information.

- Distribute Your Fact Sheet Widely. Producing a well-documented and attractive fact sheet will take considerable effort. Make that effort pay off by distributing your fact sheet to a large audience. Identify all the groups that might benefit from your message and make sure they all receive copies.

- Keep Documentation of Your Facts. A well-done fact sheet presents a wealth of information in a compressed format. Readers may want more details and specific citations of your sources. Be ready with this information.

## Site Visits

You have a great vocational education or school-to-work program. So why not show it off to someone who can help you expand it. A site visit by a state legislator or member of Congress provides an unmatched opportunity to educate them and their staff about the role vocational education plays in preparing students for challenging careers and further education. Use the visit to educate them about the role vocational-technical education plays in the community and show them how vocational education dollars are being spent. A first-hand experience will go a long way to increase your legislator's understanding of today's vocational education programs. In addition, site visits can provide press opportunities for legislators and your programs and give legislators a chance to meet with constituents.

A good tour takes careful planning. The following are guidelines for setting up a site visit:

- Get Permission from School Officials. Never surprise school officials with such an important event. Get appropriate clearance first.

- Draft Schedule. Decide which programs will be highlighted and identify key participants. Make sure that school is in session during the tour so the policymaker can see programs in progress.

- Invite Legislator. Write a letter of invitation and follow-up with the legislator's scheduler. Be sure to invite staff, particularly those handling education policy. Keep in mind that you will have to be flexible and arrange the tour around the legislator's schedule. In addition to formal recesses, members of Congress are most likely to be in their home districts on Fridays and Mondays.

- Determine Press Activities. Work with the legislator's press secretary to determine appropriate press activities. Send a press release to the local media inviting them to attend the tour. In addition giving your legislator publicity, it will increase the community's interest in your program. Be sure to follow up with the media to make sure that they attend since the legislator will be expecting them!

  Take plenty of photographs. If you are unable to have the media present during the tour, send the local reporters a follow-up summary and a photograph for their use.

- Develop Fact Sheets. At the beginning of the tour, distribute descriptions of the programs, success stories from students and any other information you feel will promote vocational education. Be sure to include your name, address and phone number on all fact sheets so staff can follow up with you later. You may want to consider having a variety of supporters present, such as parents, students and business partners, to help you make your case. Throughout the visit, emphasize the highly-skilled careers for which your students are preparing and how additional resources could benefit them.

- Write a Thank You Letter. Once the tour is over, send a thank you letter to the legislator and any staff who attended. Reiterate the need for additional funding for vocational education. If there were any positive articles in the local media, include copies with your letter. Finally, include a photo of your students and other supporters with your legislator as a reminder about how important vocational education is to the economy of their district and the future of the students.

## Do's and Don'ts

When you're dealing with legislators, have a realistic view of what you can achieve with a personal visit or other communication with them. Know what you want the legislator to do for you and what you can do for them as a resource. The following are lists of do's and don'ts that will help you in your efforts to communicate with legislators.

**Do:**

- Be positive and friendly.
- Provide reliable data or fact sheets.
- Leave your name, address and phone number.
- Personalize the issue.
- Write a thank-you letter.
- Arrange for your legislator to visit local vocational education programs.
- Know your opponent's arguments in case you are asked.
- Try to think of the political as well as the legislative impact.
- Be sensitive to the staff's limited time and remember that meetings are often cut short.
- Compliment the legislator or staff about what he or she has done that you have supported.
- Keep in touch.

**Don't:**

- Arrive unexpectedly and expect to be seen.
- Be late for an appointment.
- Be upset if your legislator can't see you personally.
- Be late for a visit.
- Be confrontational or threatening.
- Try to discuss several different issues.
- Give incorrect information, lie or make up information. For questions you cannot answer, say that you will get back to them.

## Presenting Testimony

If you are asked to testify before a legislative body, a sound knowledge of your subject, some advance preparation and the following guidelines can maximize the positive effects of your statement. Keep in mind that you will be asked to prepare both a written statement for the record and a short (usually five-minute) oral statement.

### Preparing Your Written Statement

- Briefly Introduce Yourself. Tell who you are and give information about the program you're representing (i.e., how many people you represent, how many people you serve, successes you have had). Acknowledge your appreciation to the panel for considering the issue and inviting you as a witness. This should take no more than one or two paragraphs.
- State Your Goal and Outline Your Major Points. In a few sentences, tell the board or committee what you hope to accomplish in your statement. Again, be brief.
- Talk About the Problem. Begin, for example, by discussing the problems that vocational education is solving or can solve for the nation. This informs the decision-maker but also helps cast you in the role of a problem-solver rather than one simply representing a vested self interest. Discuss the significance of the issue to your state and community.
- Talk about Current Efforts to Resolve the Problem. Describe solutions that are being tried or considered. Has anything worked in various states or communities on an experimental or demonstration basis? Explain why the efforts are insufficient or how they can be improved. This should take about one or two pages.
- List Your Specific, Concise Recommendations. Focus on what the agency you are addressing can do to help solve the problem at hand.

### Delivering Your Oral Statement

**Do:**

- remember that your elected representatives are people too. There is no need to be afraid or to think of yourself as being in court, regardless of how large or imposing the hearing room is.
- personalize your testimony. While statistics are helpful, one way to assist elected officials (and get their attention) is to let them know how the issue affects their constituents. A personal example of someone affected by a problem or someone helped by a proposed solution often carries more weight than the results of several national studies.
- remember that there is a time limit for your testimony. You do not want to find yourself in a position where your time has expired and you have not gotten to the point of your testimony. Your hope should be that they will be interested enough in you and your subject to ask questions after you finish.
- anticipate questions your testimony may prompt and have good answers in mind.
- focus on the specific issue of the hearing. Don't give a speech or present a position paper you prepared months ago, regardless of how good you think it was.

**Don't:**

- forget that, as people, your legislators like to be "talked to" rather than "read at." Look at the legislators as you talk so that the material is delivered with your eyes. To facilitate eye contact: 1) separate your pages, removing clips and staples; 2) use large type and double-space your text, triple-spacing between paragraphs; 3) leave a two-inch margin at the bottom of the page so your head won't have to tilt down so far to see the bottom line; and 4) don't carry a sentence over to the next page.
- spend more time describing your own qualifications or your programs than you do the problem at hand.

👎 assume that the panel members are experts. Legislators vote on many issues — everything from local water projects to interplanetary space programs. While you do not want to talk down to them (they probably know more than you think), you should not assume that they know all that you do about the issue at hand. Don't try to tell them everything you know, and simplify, simplify, simplify.

👎 be shy. Remember, you're important! You're the one who votes the legislators into office. But whether it's to laud or lament, compliment or counsel, be tactful and polite. You may want to appear before or meet with them again.

**Follow up.** Write a thank-you note to a legislator who has supported your position or call to ask for support on future legislation. Thank-you's published in the local papers are a great incentive to a legislator to invite you or your group to testify again.

## Political Action Committees

Political action committees, or PACs, are groups of concerned citizens who have banded together to gain legislative support for their position on a particular issue. PACs have become an integral part of the legislative and political process since they were first created. They are critical to the financing of political campaigns and range in size from thousands of members and budgets in the millions of dollars to small groups with budgets of a few thousand dollars a year.

PACs are regulated by federal election laws, and their activities and finances are closely monitored by the government. Among the legal requirements guiding their operation is a prohibition barring non-profit educational and charitable organizations, such as the American Vocational Association, from establishing PACs. However, professionals from these organizations often form PACs as a separate entitiy from their main organization.

For example, the Vocational Political Action Committee (V-PAC) was created to enhance advocacy efforts on behalf of vocational-technical education. While its 15-member Board of Directors includes many AVA members, its activities are separate from AVA.

## Coalitions

Coalitions are a grass-roots tool that can make advocacy easier since the work is shared and everyone has an opportunity to contribute. When you bring together individuals or groups for a specific purpose, the old saying, "there is strength in numbers," comes into play and you can often increase the impact of your efforts by having one consistent message being given to policy makers.

Vocational-technical education professionals, teachers, students, parents, business leaders, agency staffs and organizations can work together on issues. Coalition activities can include letter-writing campaigns, meetings with legislators, activating telephone trees or public information campaigns and sponsoring legislative breakfasts, receptions and similar events.

Establishing, managing and working with a coalition requires lots of planning. The first step is to determine what type and size of coalition is needed. The second step is to determine an agenda along with strategies to achieve the coalition's goal. Third, leadership is determined and assignments are made and carried out. Coordination of activities and efforts is key to a successful coalition.

## Public Information Campaigns: Community Awareness and Media

Legislators react to constituent pressure and you can create this pressure through a public information campaign. Conscious efforts to influence public opinion will complement your direct lobbying efforts such as personal visits, letters and site visits. Legislators listen to public opinion, since after all, the public is their constituency. Once the public understands the important role vocational-technical education plays in the community, they will have the knowledge necessary to speak out on the issue. There are two sure ways to get a story before the public — through a community awareness program and through the local media.

### Raising Community Awareness

The most effective way to take the vocational-technical education message to the most concerned members of the community is face-to-face in public meetings and at meetings of local service clubs and other such organizations. Representatives of vocational-technical education should be available to speak to community groups about the benefits and needs of vocational-technical education.

The first step is to identify local speakers such as knowledgeable teachers, administrators, business representatives, parents and students. You may even want for formalize this into a "speaker's bureau."

Next, identify local service clubs and professional organizations and send a letter announcing the availability of speakers on vocational-education, tech prep, school-to-work and other public education topics. Having someone take responsibiliity will help to ensure that scheduling speakers gets done and that information is shared with speakers and groups.

In addition to formal presentations, there should be advocates of vocational-technical education at meetings of the school board, PTA and other education-related groups. In these forums, the views of local business operators and parents of vocational-technical education students carry much weight.

Use materials like those shown in the pages of this book as the basis for presentations before groups and for handouts. The AVA image videos *Learning to Work: Working to Learn* and *Get Your Career In Gear!* are excellent vehicles for spreading the word about quality vocational-technical education and its role in creating school-to-work systems for all students. The videos come with how-to presentation tips and supporting materials. They are available from the AVA Products Department at 800-826-9972.

### Targeting the Media

There are several ways to gain local media attention and coverage of vocational-technical education issues and events. Most important, a school or district should establish a cooperative relationship with media reporters who regularly cover education in the community. Keep these members of the press well informed through frequent mailings. In addition, invite them to see first-hand various programs at your schools — not just at special events, such as back-to-school night or Voc Ed Week, but with a personal invitation to observe an especially interesting lab or sit in on a faculty-business advisory group planning meeting.

And whenever you have a chance to recognize excellence by a student or group of students, be sure to alert the media! Especially for TV news reporters, the setting, or scene, of a news event is critical. If a group of students are being saluted for their performance, don't just have them walk across a stage to receive a hand shake. Set up a session for the media where the students are in a lab or other appropriate setting and can explain directly to the reporters what they did that brought them the special recognition.

In addition to cultivating media contacts who will report on your activities, you can try to get directly into the paper or on the TV news — through letters to the editor and op-ed articles for the newspapers and guest editorials on the air for TV and radio stations. Whenever an educational issue becomes hot in your community and is getting continuing coverage in the local media, call on your volunteer speakers to write a letter to the editor or request a broadcast editorial spot to comment on the issue.

As with speakers at public meetings, use the material available from the AVA Products Department to make points about vocational-technical education with media contacts. Also, you can refer news reporters to the Communications Department at AVA national headquarters (800-826-9972) for more information.

## Individual Activities

Personal participation in the political process can benefit vocational-technical education professionals and their profession. Your participation can bring attention to the field of vocational-technical education as well as provide you with learning experiences and personal growth. When you are working with others on a campaign or getting out the vote, you are often talking and answering questions about vocational-technical education. If you work for a candidate who wins an election, you will already have established the basis of a working relationship.

Some suggested activities include:

- Register to vote
- Participate in political party of your choice
- Volunteer for a campaign - stuff envelopes, distribute fliers, arrange events, etc.
- Sponsor or attend candidate forums
- Contribute money to a campaign or PAC
- Hold a fund-raiser for a candidate
- Attend town hall meetings

# Here's What You Need to Make Your Case!

As we said in the Introduction at the front of this book, there are people and organizations who oppose educational programs that help students prepare for careers. They say teaching students job skills or relating what they learn in school to careers they will pursue when they graduate is not the role of public education. For example, a published review of *Setting the Record Straight: Responses to Misconceptions About Public Education in the United States*, by Gerald W. Bracey, advises: "If your brother-in-law says, 'Schools aren't preparing students for work,' Bracey suggests you say, 'schools shouldn't prepare students for work.'"

Do statements like that make you want to fire back? If so, there is plenty of ammunition available.

Look to books and authors such as these: *Other Ways to Win*, by Kenneth C. Gray and Edwin L. Herr; *Rethinking America*, by Hedrick Smith; *Monster Under the Bed*, by Stan Davis and Jim Botkin; *Teaching the New Basic Skills*, by Richard J. Murnane and Frank Levy; *Work-Based Learning*, by James Hoerner and James B. Wehrley; and *Tech Prep Associate Degree*, by Dan Hull and Dale Parnell, recognized as the father of tech prep.

Also use this section of *Making the Case*. The following printed material provides facts, figures and examples that demonstrate the value of vocational-technical and school-to-careers education. You are encouraged to customize the fact sheets presented here with your own facts and figures about local vocational and school-to-careers programs.

The origin of this material is indicated. Most of it is from publications such as *Techniques* magazine, *Vocational Education Weekly, School-To-Work Reporter* and other periodicals. The entire content of this book is protected by copyright held by the American Vocational Association. But for the material in this section only, pages 12 through 52, AVA grants permission for reprint by purchasers of this book. Please note that "a permission to reprint" acknowledgement is already printed on the bottom of each page in this section.

So feel free to copy and use this material for widespread free distribution. To make photocopying easier, this book has an Otabind spine that will allow you to lay pages flat against a copying machine without harm to the book.

This is your ammunition in the fight to preserve valuable education programs that may be under attack in many communities!

**Note:** To avoid confusion, only page numbers from the original publications are printed on the pages in this section; regular pagination resumes on page 54.

# MAKING YOUR CASE

Whether the issue is a state or federal one, you'll need the facts and figures to bolster your case.

It is important that you have the necessary information about vocational-technical education at the ready!

You are the expert on your programs. When working with a legislator, you already should have the information on your specific program such as the careers for which your students are preparing, support you receive from business and industry, the percentage of your students continuing their education at the postsecondary level and the job placement rate for your students. It also is important to have "at the ready" positive testimonials from parents, students and business partners. How has your program improved the life of your students? Has it opened up more opportunities for different careers or further education?

The following is information about the benefits of vocational-technical education across the country, from recent public polls to specific statistics. Use these facts to help you make your case!

## The American Public Supports the Federal Investment in Education!

- Seventy-five percent of the American public said that federal aid to education should be expanded. — *Gallup, 1995*
- By almost two to one, young voters (18-34) cite education as a top voting issue over the budget, deficit, crime, and Medicare. — *NBC/Wall Street Journal, 11/95*
- Seventy-six percent of Americans disapprove of reducing federal funding for low-income schools to balance the federal budget. — *Times Mirror, 1995*
- Education was identified by members of the Council on Competitiveness as one of the top policies that the government should address to strengthen US competitiveness for the future, followed by the budget and regulatory reform. — *Competitiveness Index, 1996*
- Ninety-two percent of Americans believe that by providing aid for people who want to go to college, the federal government is investing in American's future — *KCR Research 12/95*

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**MAKING YOUR CASE**

# Vocational-Technical Education Strengthens Our Nation's Economy

- By the Year 2000, 20% of all jobs will require at least a bachelors degree, 15% will be unskilled and 65% will require more than high school education. — *U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*

  **FACT:** 61% of vocational students enter some form of postsecondary education and about half enter four-year colleges. — *Vocational Education: Myths and Realities, Vocational Education Journal, 1993*

- American workers with high skills are thriving in today's competitive workforce. However, those without a high school or college degree have suffered large and sustained declines in real income. — *Competitiveness Index, 1996*

  **FACT:** Taking one vocational course each year during the four years of high school raises the graduation rate of at-risk youth by six percent. — *Vocational Education: Myths and Realities, Vocational Education Journal, 1993*

- Young people (16-24 years) who had left school during the previous year had a 53% unemployment rate. In addition, those who were employed earned 33% less than their counterparts who had finished high school. — *The Condition of Education, 1995*

  **FACT:** Vocational-technical education students who obtained a job matching their field of study had a lower rate of unemployment and spent almost 20% more time in the labor force than a comparable group of general track students. — *National Assessment of Vocational Education, Educational Outcomes of Vocational Course Taking, 1994*

***And Did You Know...***

- **Business supports vocational-technical education**: A survey of employers participating in work-site based education for vocational-technical education students found that 90% either agreed or strongly agreed that their students were productive workers and 86% indicated they were satisfied with the schools' ability to provide students with the skills they needed. — *School-to-Work Transition Lessons on Recruiting and Sustaining Employer Involvement, 1994*
- **Vocational-technical graduates earn more:** Secondary school vocational-technical graduates who did not immediately continue their education at the postsecondary level had wages that were ten percent higher than those of non-vocational graduates not immediately pursuing postsecondary education. Further, the real hourly wages of vocational-technical program graduates increased at a more rapid rate than those of other high school graduates. — *The Impact of Vocational-Technical Programs: Labor Market Outcomes, Northeastern University, 1996*

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**MAKING YOUR CASE**

## Today's Vocational-Technical Education Programs

- Most secondary vocational education is provided in comprehensive high schools, with vocational schools enrolling about 10% of secondary students in vocational-technical education. — *National Assessment of Vocational Education, Volume II, 1994*
- About three quarters of all comprehensive high schools offer occupational programs, while more than 90% offer introductory vocational courses. Almost all comprehensive high schools offer either vocational courses or provide access to area vocational schools. — *National Assessment of Vocational Education, Volume II, 1994*
- About 5.8 million students were enrolled in postsecondary vocational education in 1990, making up about 35% of all undergraduate postsecondary enrollments. — *National Assessment of Vocational Education, Volume II, 1994*
- More than 80% of public high schools and 96% of postsecondary institutions offering vocational courses reported taking action to integrate academic and vocational education by the 1991-92 school year. — *Vocational Education in the United States: The Early 1990s, National Center for Education Statistics, 1995*
- At the beginning of 1996, the U.S. Department of Labor estimated that 116,350 students, 41,800 employers and 2,730 schools throughout the country were involved in state and local school-to-work ventures. — *School to Work: Partnerships Smooth the Transition, HR Magazine, July 1996*
- Community colleges enrolled 60% of all postsecondary vocational-technical education students; private proprietary institutions enrolled 22%; and four-year institutions enrolled 11%. — *Vocational Education in the United States: The Early 1990s, National Center for Education Statistics, 1995*
- Business leaders see quality in vocational-technical education: While many business leaders are critical about the overall quality of a high school education, 82% of businesses rate the quality of secondary vocational-technical programs as "good" or better and 90% rate postsecondary vocational-technical education programs as "good" or better. — *National Assessment of Vocational Education, Educational Outcomes of Vocational Course Taking, 1994*

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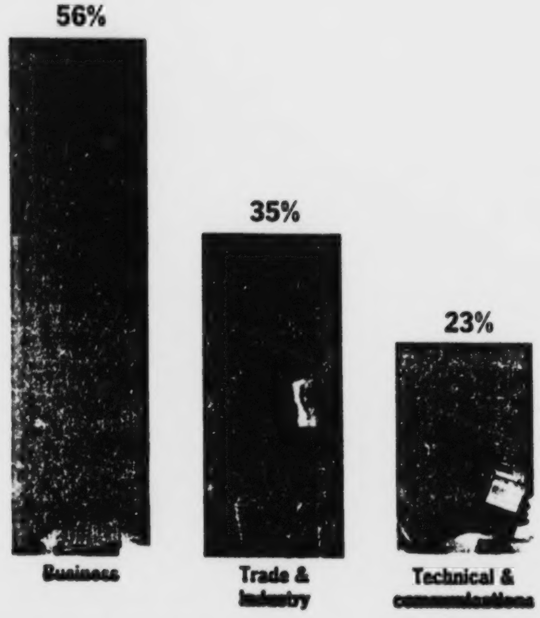
# STATUS OF SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

*These pages highlight findings for secondary vocational education published by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and MPR Associates, Inc. (MPR) in a 1995 update to the report, Vocational Education in the United States: 1969-1990. The complete update report is available from NCES, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC.*

## OCCUPATIONAL PROGRAMS WITH THE HIGHEST PARTICIPATION

Business was the most popular occupational program, with more than half of 1992 public high school graduates completing at least one business course. The next most popular program was trade and industry, followed closely by technical and communications.

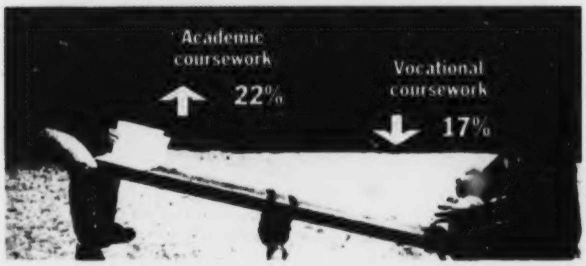
**Percent of Graduates Completing One or More Courses in Selected Occupational Areas**



## ► COURSEWORK TRENDS: 1982–1992

Between 1982 and 1992, the average number of credits public high school graduates earned in academic subjects rose, while the average number of credits earned in vocational education fell. During this period, academic coursetaking was up by 22 percent and vocational coursetaking was down by 17 percent.

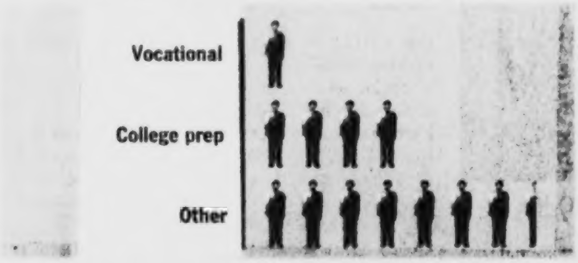
**Percent Change in Academic and Vocational Coursetaking**



## ► CURRICULUM SPECIALIZATION

Only a few 1992 public high school graduates (8 percent) were vocational "specialists."* In contrast, about one-third (32 percent) specialized in the college prep curriculum. A majority of graduates (60 percent) failed to meet the criteria for either the college prep or vocational specializations.

**Proportion of Graduates by Curriculum Specialization**



*Vocational specialists completed 4 or more credits in a single occupational program area, with at least 2 of these credits beyond the introductory level.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Education Longitudinal Study, Second Follow-Up, 1992, and High School and Beyond 1982 Sophomore Cohort.

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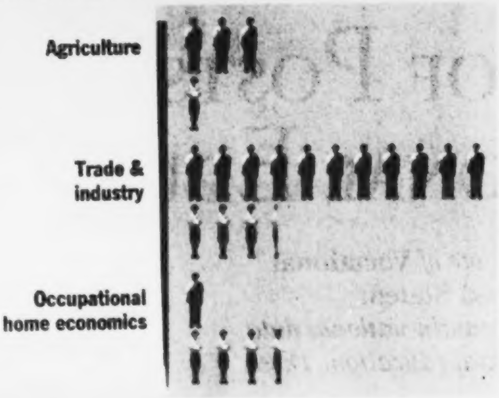
## ▶OCCUPATIONAL PROGRAMS WITH THE LARGEST GENDER GAPS

Among 1992 public high school graduates, men were more than twice as likely as women to have completed at least one course in agriculture (14 percent compared with 5 percent) and trade and industry (54 percent compared with 16 percent). On the other hand, women were more than three times as likely as men to have completed at least one course in occupational home economics (17 percent compared with 5 percent). Women were also twice as likely as men to complete courses in health.

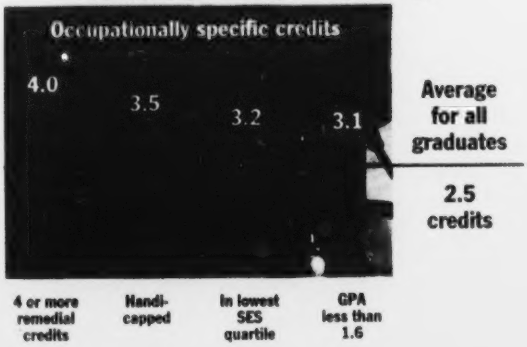
**Proportion of Male and Female Graduates Completing One or More Courses in Selected Areas**



## ▶SPECIAL POPULATIONS PARTICIPATING IN OCCUPATIONALLY SPECIFIC COURSES

Among 1992 public high school graduates, members of special populations generally completed more occupationally specific courses than did other graduates. Students who had accumulated more remedial credits, were disabled, came from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and had lower grade point averages earned greater numbers of occupationally specific credits than did other students.

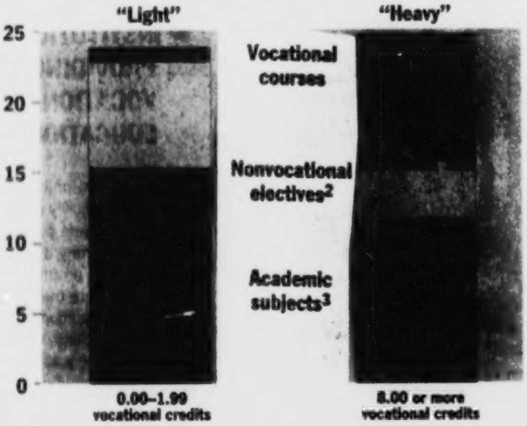
**Average Occupational Credits Earned by Selected Special Populations Groups**



## ▶COMPARING THE COURSEWORK OF "HEAVY" AND "LIGHT" VOCATIONAL COURSETAKERS

1992 public high school graduates who were "heavy" vocational coursetakers earned more credits overall than did "light" vocational coursetakers.[1] However, "heavy" vocational coursetakers earned fewer credits than "light" coursetakers in all nonvocational electives and academic subject areas.

**Average Credits Earned by "Heavy" and "Light" Vocational Coursetakers**



## QUICK FACTS

Although only about 8 percent of 1992 public high school graduates were vocational "specialists," about 24 percent of graduates were vocational "concentrators," completing 3 or more credits in a single occupational program. Graduates were more likely to concentrate in trade and industry programs than in other programs, and were least likely to concentrate in technical and communications and health programs.

▼

1992 public high school graduates who took large numbers of vocational courses did not necessarily complete advanced occupational courses. In fact, 20 percent of graduates who earned 8 or more vocational credits and about 25 percent of those who earned 4 or more occupationally specific credits did not take any occupational courses above the introductory level.

▼

On average, 1992 public high school graduates accumulated only 0.15 credits in cooperative education and work experience courses—equivalent to about one in seven graduates completing a yearlong course. College prep graduates and graduates with no curriculum specialization earned few such credits (0.04 and 0.09, respectively). In contrast, vocational "specialists" earned about 1 credit in cooperative education and work experience—equivalent to a full-year course.

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[1] "Heavy" vocational coursetakers accumulated 8 or more credits in vocational education, while "light" vocational coursetakers accumulated fewer than 2 vocational credits.
[2] Nonvocational electives include foreign language, fine arts, and personal use courses, such as personal health and physical education courses.
[3] Academic subjects include English, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Photographs for "Data File" © PHOTODISC™ 1994.

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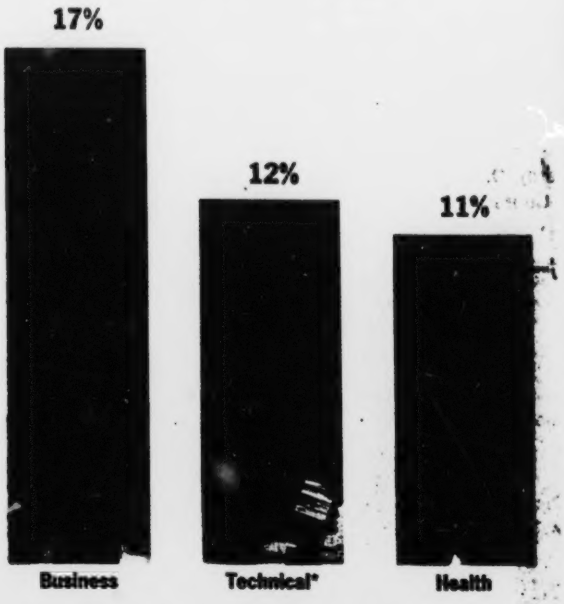
# STATUS OF POSTSECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

*These pages highlight findings for postsecondary vocational education published by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and MPR Associates, Inc. (MPR) in a 1995 update to the report, Vocational Education in the United States: 1969-1990. The complete update report is available from NCES, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC.*

## OCCUPATIONAL PROGRAMS WITH THE LARGEST ENROLLMENT

Of 1990 nonbaccalaureate students, 46 percent declared vocational majors. As in secondary schools, business was the most popular postsecondary vocational program, with about 17 percent declaring a major in this area. Next in popularity were the combined technical fields,* followed closely by health programs. The remaining 6 percent declared majors in other vocational areas.

**Percent of Students Declaring a Major in Selected Occupational Areas**

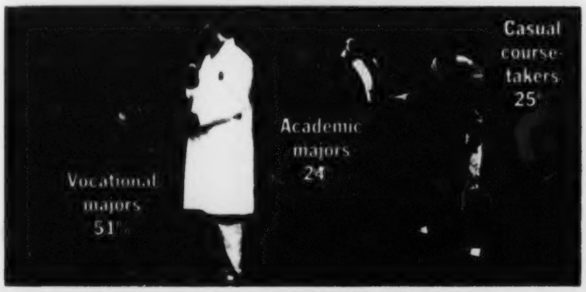


*The combined technical fields included computers and data processing, engineering and science technologies, protective services, and communications technologies.

## ▶PARTICIPATION IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

In 1990, nonbaccalaureate postsecondary students were twice as likely to report majoring in a vocational program area as they were to report either majoring in an academic area or taking personal or avocational courses.* About half of the students reported vocational majors, whereas one in four either had an academic major or were regarded as "casual coursetakers."

**Percent of Students by Declared Major**

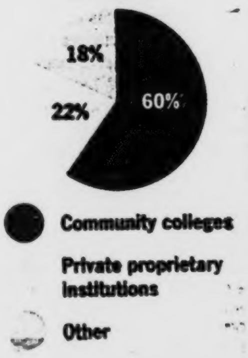


*For example, basic skills or leisure and recreational activities courses.

## ▶INSTITUTIONS PROVIDING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

In 1990, community colleges served the majority of nonbaccalaureate postsecondary students reporting a vocational major. Private proprietary institutions were the second largest vocational education provider. The rest of the students were served by other types of postsecondary institutions, including public 4-year; public vocational-technical; private, nonprofit 4-year; and private, nonprofit less-than-4-year institutions.

**Percent of Vocational Majors Served by Different Institutions**



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1990 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, and National Assessment of Vocational Education, Survey of Public

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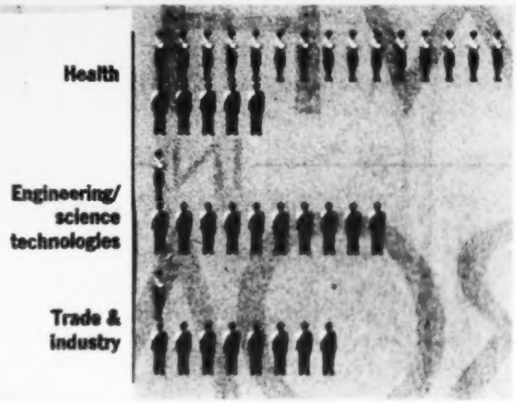
## ▶ COMMUNITY COLLEGE OCCUPATIONAL PROGRAMS WITH THE LARGEST GENDER GAPS

Among 1990 community college students, women were more than twice as likely as men to report majoring in health (15 percent compared with 5 percent). On the other hand, men were more than twice as likely as women to report majoring in engineering and science technologies (10 percent compared with 1 percent), and trade and industry (8 percent compared with 1 percent). Men were also more likely to major in protective services.

**Proportion of Men and Women Majoring in Selected Occupational Areas**



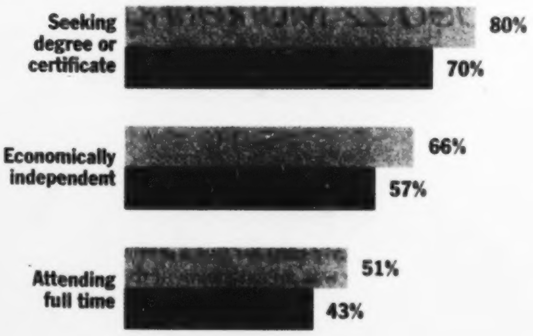
## ▶ COMPARISON OF ACADEMIC AND VOCATIONAL MAJORS

In 1990, nonbaccalaureate students with vocational majors were more likely than their peers with academic majors to be enrolled full time and to be seeking a formal degree or certificate rather than casually taking courses. Those with vocational majors were also more likely to be economically independent from their parents.

■ **Vocational majors**

■ **Academic majors**

**Percent of Vocational and Academic Majors by Selected Characteristics**



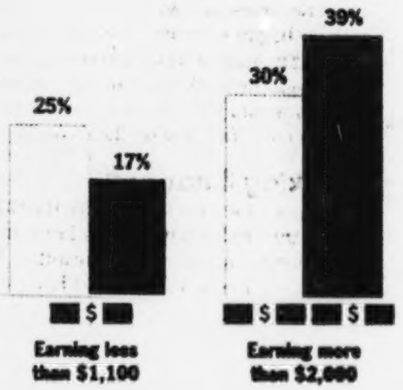
## ▶ EARNINGS OUTCOMES

Postsecondary vocational completers who were employed in a field related to their training in summer 1990 earned higher salaries than their peers with unrelated employment. For instance, vocational completers who were employed in a related field were more likely to earn over $2,000 per month than were those with unrelated employment. In contrast, vocational completers employed in an unrelated field were more likely to earn less than $1,100 per month than those with related employment. The remaining employed graduates — roughly 45 percent — earned between $1,100 and $2,000.

■ **Vocational completers in unrelated jobs**

■ **Vocational completers in related jobs**

**Percent of Vocational Completers in Related and Unrelated Jobs by Earning Level**



## QUICK FACTS

Vocational program enrollment varied by institution type. In 1990, nonbaccalaureate postsecondary students at private proprietary; private, nonprofit 4-year; and public 2- to 3-year institutions (community colleges) were more likely to major in business than students at public 4-year institutions. In contrast, students at public vocational-technical institutes and private proprietary schools were much more likely to major in trade and industry than students at all other postsecondary institutions.

▼

Three-quarters of community colleges reported offering cooperative education or work experience programs in 1991-92. In contrast, about half of public vocational-technical institutes and area vocational schools serving postsecondary students reported offering these programs.

▼

Among 1990 nonbaccalaureate postsecondary students, almost half of those who reported majoring in a vocational program received some sort of financial aid. Overall, aided vocational majors received about $3,000 in federal aid, and about $1,200 in each of state and institutional aid. Vocational majors were more likely to receive federal grants than federal loans. However, their average Pell grant was smaller than their average Stafford loan ($1,400 compared with $2,300).

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Secondary Schools, Spring 1992; and U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1990 Panel.

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*Economic contributions*

# Florida high-tech centers return 814% on state investment

The State of Florida is receiving an enormous dividend on its network of 37 high technology electronics centers that offer a high quality education to 2,273 students. The gross wages earned by graduates of those centers each year fortify the state's economy "dramatically," according to a 1993 study by the University of South Florida.

The university, which coordinates the network of high technology vocational education centers, estimates the state has received an 814% return on its investment in the Centers of Electronic Emphasis since 1986.

A statewide education/industry partnership has created a network of high technology vocational programs in Florida schools in electronics and automotive technology. The state uses industry involvement and support to create "turnkey" systems that are installed in secondary and postsecondary schools that compete to receive the awards (see previous article).

The state began working on the concept in 1986, opening pilot Centers of Electronic Emphasis at five vocational schools and five community colleges. In 1988 five additional pilot centers were added to refine the curriculum, turnkey teaching system and statewide management system in preparation for replication. Twenty-two centers were replicated statewide in 1989. at the time of the study, Florida had 37 centers.

## Return on investment

The state started out with an initial investment of $1,300,000 in 1986 and an additional $650,000 in funding was authorized in 1988. This was augmented by $160,000 in matching funds from industry partners. In 1989, the state invested an additional $2,325,000, while industry partners contributed an additional $1.3 million.

Industry partnership contributions (in some cases represented by discounts on equipment purchased by the state for use in the centers) now total 57% of investment funds.

Once the state and its industry partners had installed the equipment, trained the teachers and provided the curriculum materials, all further costs of each center are borne by the high school, vocational school or community college.

The returns started coming in 1989 as trainees were placed in jobs. The placement rate was 92%. Entry-level salaries averaged $20,000. The result was $1,741,139 in gross wages contributing to the state's economy. Compared to the investment of $1.3 million, that was a 34% return for the first year.

In 1990 the cumulative gross wages were $6.8 million compared to the cumulative investment of $1.95 million, or a 252% return. By 1992, the projected annual gross wages was expected to total $39 million. Compared to the cumulative $4.2 million total investment, this results in a total 814% return on the state's investment.

## Characteristics

The 37 electronics centers are located at community colleges (51%) and vocational-technical centers (49%). Enrollment is less evenly distributed however, with 63% of students at community colleges and 37% at voc-tech centers.

Demand for education has stabilized at an average of 63 students per center. Of those students, 10% are female.

One by-product of the centers' program is to reduce the dropout rate from 34% in 1985 to 14% in 1991.

The electronics program is fully articulated with a coordinated core curricula available in vocational schools and community colleges. In addition to the core curriculum, the community college centers offer 18 "high wage options" including avionics, robotics, biomedical equipment, computer integrated manufacturing, laser electro-optics and telephony. The University of Central Florida accepts selected core courses, and specialization courses are accepted at full credit toward a BS degree in engineering.

## Secrets

Two secrets of the program are the involvement of industry and the assistance of the state university system.

Through the Governor's High Technology and Industry Council, the state formed an industry/education partnership that determines the minimum or core competencies that must be taught to meet the state's increasing demand for skilled electronics technicians.

Industry is involved by serving on the board that reviews applications by schools to become Centers of Electronic Emphasis. Industry then donates the equipment, cash and purchase discounts for the center. Industry assists in curriculum development, planning, instructor training, instructor update training, and the initial assessment and annual evaluation of each center. Industry and the state education agency set the statewide skill standards that graduates must meet.

A consortium network is headed by the High Technology Development Office in the Department of Adult and Vocational Education at the University of South Florida, funded by a grant from the state education agency. The consortium provides for annual statewide meetings, data collection, curriculum development and updates, design of the turnkey teaching system and updates to it, meetings for selection of textbooks, regional meetings and inservice training, facilitating on-site industry evaluations and reports for the state department of education.

A major role is played by the clearinghouse operated by the High Technology Office and its electronic bulletin board, which is used by member centers to report problems and solutions.

*Vocational Education Weekly,* August 16, 1993
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## Automotive centers

The pattern established with the Centers of Electronic Emphasis was replicated in the more recent creation of the Centers of Automotive Emphasis.

The state has invested $2.6 million in creating the eight original centers and six new centers. The projected return in wages by graduates for all of these centers is a $7.1 million contribution to the state's economy. This works out to a 173% return on investment.

The contributions by industrial partners in the automotive centers program is even more generous: In 1989 the state expended $1.4 million, while the partners contributed $1.5 million. In 1990, the state expended $1.2 million while industry contributed $2.2 million.

The automotive centers program is 900 hours for the technical curriculum. Thus a student can achieve an automotive technology certificate in one year of full-time study. Many students spread the study over two years and take the additional academic work to achieve an associate degree.

There are also five centers that offer an additional one-year curriculum in automotive electronics and are called Centers of Autotronic Emphasis.

These centers cost $650,000 in 1988 and by 1991 had returned $2.1 million in wages to the economy, a 236% return on investment.

Graduates of the automotive centers earn an average of $21,019, while graduates of the autotronics centers earn an average of $43,680.

## Learning faster

The High Technology Development Office estimates that students' learning curve is approximately 33% faster in the Centers of Automotive Emphasis compared to those enrolled in traditional high school automotive programs. One center administered assessment tests to students from both groups and the Centers of Automotive Emphasis graduates scored more than 38% higher than students from traditional high school programs.

The high school Centers of Automotive Emphasis program is only 450 hours a year, so it takes two years to complete the 900-hour program in high school. Only full-time adult students have completed the program so far.

## Classroom efficiency

Due to the demand for training opportunities, there are student waiting lists for enrollment in the centers. Additional classes have been added in the evenings. About 700 students are currently enrolled.

With classroom management, high schools have found they can double the number of students served with the same number of instructional staff. With these efficiencies, the eight original centers increased enrollment by 79% from March 1990 to December 1991 with the same staff. Adult and high school students are satisfactorily enrolled simultaneously in the same classes.

Thirty-one percent of the centers are in high schools with 36% of the enrollment. Twenty-three percent are in community colleges with 18% of enrollment. And 46% of the centers are at vocational-technical centers with 46% of the enrollment.

## Upgrading

Currently employed professional technicians, 85% of whom are employed by auto dealerships, have been enrolling in the Autotronics Centers program for skills upgrading. In 1991, 12,050 of such professionals participated in short-term workshops and skill upgrading courses.

About 25% have 1-5 years experience, about 26% have 5-10 years experience, 20% have 10-15 years, 14% have 15-20 years and 15% have more than 20 years experience.

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*The role of voc ed in putting people to work*

# Kansas voc ed graduates earn $34,000 in first year

Is vocational education effective? Salaries of recent graduates are one way to gauge the effectiveness of vocational education. For example, in Kansas vocational students earn as much as $34,661 only six months after graduation.

Since the federal government collects practically no statistics on the effectiveness of vocational education, Vocational Education Weekly recently asked for studies that shed light on the effectiveness of voc ed. The Kansas Board of Education sent us a copy of their "Accountability Report for the Fiscal Year 1991."

## Average: $15,832

That report indicates that graduates of state postsecondary vocational programs offered at public community colleges and area vocational-technical institutes are earning an average of $15,832 a year about six months after graduation.

The report is based on followup surveys of students who completed or left the programs. It is conservative since statistics on salary and employment are based only on respondents to the survey compared to enrollees in the program; those not responding are counted as unemployed.

This average salary reflects a wide variety of salaries, ranging from $8,874 a year to $34,661 a year. This range of salaries was reported by 6,219 students who were in jobs or higher education when surveyed.

Those 6,219 were the students who responded to the followup survey and reported being employed out of the 8,008 students who completed the program or left to take a job in the field before completing the program.

## Dental Hygienist

The top average salaries earned by state postsecondary vocational graduates were the $34,661 earned by students completing the Dental Hygienist program. Statewide, in FY 1991, 44 students enrolled and 18 completed that program or left shortly before graduation, according to state Board of Education. Of those, 12 were earning an average salary of $34,661 a year after six months.

There are two dental hygiene programs in the state. The program at Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, Kansas, is an example of the best of vocational education: Each year more than 500 people inquire about entering the program. Last year 116 applications were received for the 26 slots available.

The program, like most health occupations programs, experiences a 20% attrition rate, resulting in about 20 students graduating each year. In 1990, 100% of graduates were employed, in 1991, 94% and in 1992, 100% again. Of those graduating, 100% passed the exams for listing by the national board.

Graduates of the Johnson County Dental Hygiene program earn an average of $35,610, according to Dr. Sally Winship, assistant dean of science, health care and mathematics for the college.

## Health is "hot"

In general, health occupations are "hot," Winship said. She noted that the nursing program last year had 3,000 inquiries for only 55 slots. She attributed this to a recognition of the excellent long-term prospects in the health care field and the fact that health occupations salaries have gone up in recent years.

What is the secret to a successful vocational program? Winship listed these factors:

1) Meeting labor market demand;
2) Keeping in touch with the community through an active advisory committee that consults on skills needed and technology requirements;
3) Keeping the program technically current;
4) Having quality faculty;
5) Providing support for students.

## Radiation therapy

But this is not an isolated phenomenon. The Dental Hygienist program is closely followed by the Medical Radiation Therapy program offered by the two-year division of Washburn University, a municipal, four-year institution in Topeka.

Fourteen students enrolled in the program in FY 1991. All of them completed the program and 100% of them were employed at the time of the six-month followup. Their average salary: $33,120 a year.

The radiation therapy program is actually a three-year program. The one-year radiation therapy curriculum is open only to those students who have completed the two-year radiologic technology program (graduates of that program across the state earned an average of $20,300 six months after graduation).

This is the eighth year the program has been offered, according to Dr. Willie Dunlop, dean of the division. The program attracts a higher percentage of males than most health occupations programs, he said. All graduates have to pass a performance test in order to be listed on the Radiation Therapy national registry.

## Over $20,000

But the Accountability Report shows these are not just a few isolated examples. Out of the 113 postsecondary courses offered by community colleges and area vocational schools in the state, 22 occupations had graduates earning average salaries of $20,000 or more.

In addition to the three occupations mentioned above, that includes: Computer Programming; Mortuary Science; Biomedical Equipment Technician; Civil Technology; Energy Technology; Water and Wastewater Technology; Alcohol Awareness; Radiological Technology; Respiratory Therapy Technician; Associate Degree Nursing; Chemical Technology; Fire Science; Law Enforcement; Electrician; Lineman; Aircraft Mechanic; Computer Systems Technician (repair); Cooling and Refrigeration Installation;

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Electronic Occupations; and Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Technician.

On the other hand, graduates of the Ornamental Horticulture, Microcomputer Applications and Food Service Management curricula were only earning an average of $8,874 a year the first year. The rest of the 113 occupations fell in between.

The recession has apparently had an effect in Kansas too: the average salary earned by FY 1990 graduates was $16,323, $495 higher than average earnings for FY 1991 graduates.

## How many employed

Is the vocational education community educating students for job openings that exist?

Out of the 113 occupations listed, in 39 it was reported that 100% of the graduates were employed six months after leaving school. Another 21 occupations listed more than 90% of their graduates employed — a total of 60 occupational programs with 90% or more of their graduates employed six months after program completion.

On average, 78% of the graduates completing a certificate program were employed six months later.

## Employer satisfaction

How good are the graduates? Do employers think they have the skills needed?

98% of employers responding to the followup survey rated employee job skills as "very good" or "good;" 49% were rated "very good."

## Skill standards

In many instances the vocational education community is training students to take licensing examinations administered by the state for some trades or proficiency examinations by occupational associations so the student can be awarded a national certificate — an industry skill standard.

In FY 1991, 8,232 persons took occupational proficiency examinations and licensing examinations in Kansas. Of that number, 7,422 — or 90% — passed the examination.

These exams ranged from cosmetology (93% passed) to aviation power plant technology (100%).

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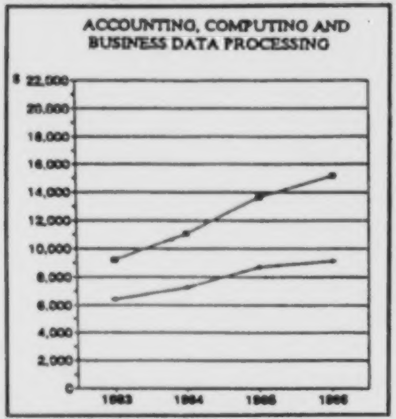
*Economic contributions*

# IRS data shows Ohio voc ed increases student incomes

Seven years after graduation, Ohio vocational education students were earning significantly more than those of a comparable group of non-vocational graduates. And the earnings gap between the two groups continues to widen with time, according to an Ohio University study.

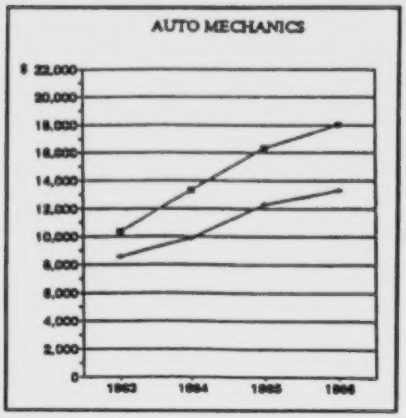


The study is one of very few large-scale evaluations of vocational education and it shows significant economic advantage for vocational students.

According to the study, by 1983, the 1979 graduates of each of 12 different secondary-level vocational education programs enjoyed an earnings advantage over the comparison group, and by 1986 that advantage had jumped by at least 13% and in some cases as much as 47%.

The average income of the 1979 vocational education graduates outdistanced that of their counterparts in the general workforce by 20% in some career fields and up to 90% in other fields.

For example, students who graduated from a certified secondary electronics program in 1979 were earning a mean income of $11,060 by 1983 compared with an income of around $9,000 for an "equivalent group" — members of the general population who are of the same age, sexual distribution and educational achievement, but did not necessarily receive vocational education.



By 1984, the mean income of the electronics graduates was about $14,000 compared to around $10,000 for the equivalent group. In 1985 the comparison was $18,000 and $12,000, and by 1986 the difference between the two groups was nearly $7,000 — almost $20,000 in mean income for the vocational graduates compared to $13,000 for the equivalent group.

## The study

The longitudinal study was performed in 1991 by Economics Professor I. A. Ghazalah of Ohio University under contract to the Division of Vocational and Career Education at the Ohio Department of Education.

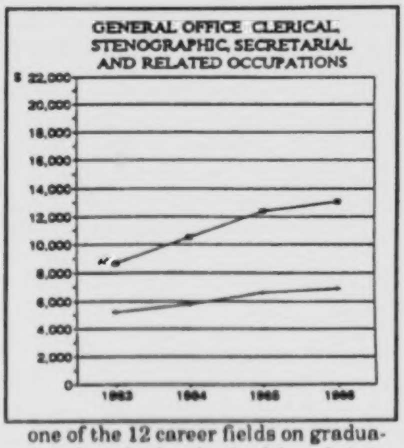
### Charts

**The charts on this page and the next show the longitudinal profiles of mean earnings for students in nine of the 12 career fields studied. The top line shows the mean incomes for each of four years of 1979 vocational graduates in that field. The bottom line shows the mean income of the equivalent group from the general population.**

Previous studies showed that vocational students earned slightly more than non-vocational equivalent individuals upon graduation. But those studies were usually based on self-reported surveys of relatively small groups and did not follow the careers of the student groups over several years.

The Ghazalah study draws on Internal Revenue Service reports of incomes of 13,109 individuals who graduated from 12 secondary-level vocational programs in Ohio public schools in 1979. Income data for the years 1983 through 1986 was collected on each individual.

Each of these students had completed a minimum of 450 hours of study and received a certificate in one of the 12 career fields on graduation from high school, although it is not known in what field they are currently employed.



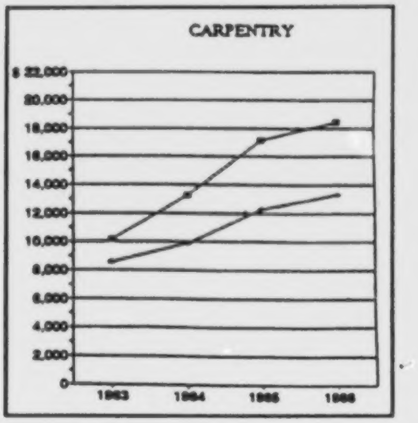
## Mean incomes

The study tracked "mean incomes," a figure that is halfway between the highest and lowest income in the group.

The study does not tell what the highest and lowest incomes were, but only the income figure that is at the midpoint of those two extremes for each year indicated.

## At-risk students

The study also appears to show the utility in economic terms of vocational education for at-risk students.



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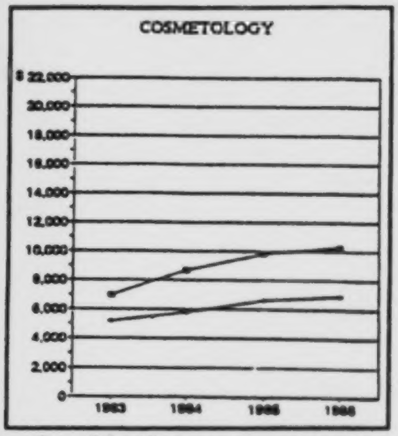
# Ohio research study



One of the 12 career programs was Occupational Work Experience. This is a special cooperative education program for at-risk students .

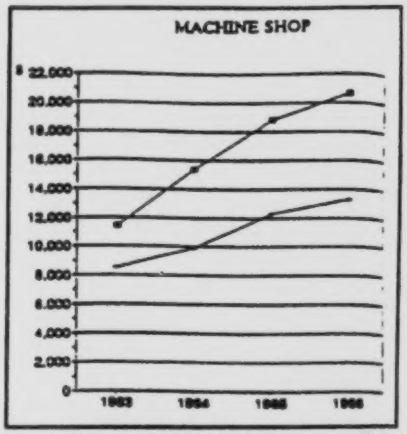
Those enrolled in this program are one or more years behind their class with low test scores and at risk of dropping out of school. They are placed in paid work experience for 15 hours a week during the school year.

In 1983, the Occupational Work Experience group who graduated in 1979 earned slightly more than the general population. By 1986 their mean earnings had increased to $2,000 more than the comparison group.

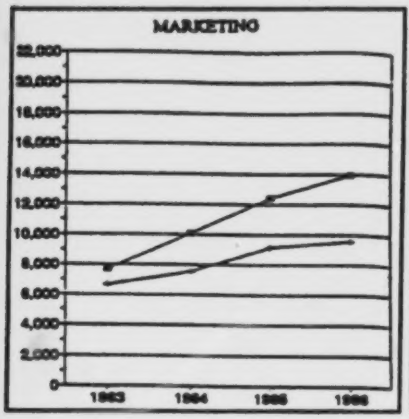
## Postsecondary

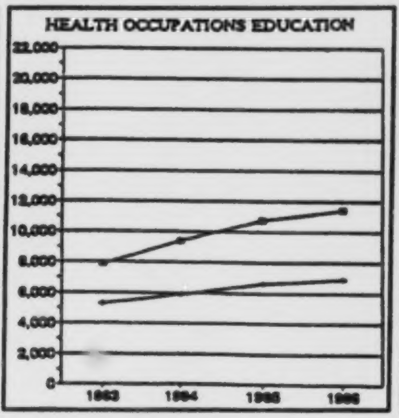
The study also tracked the mean incomes of graduates from associate-level degree programs in Health Occupations and Technical Education.

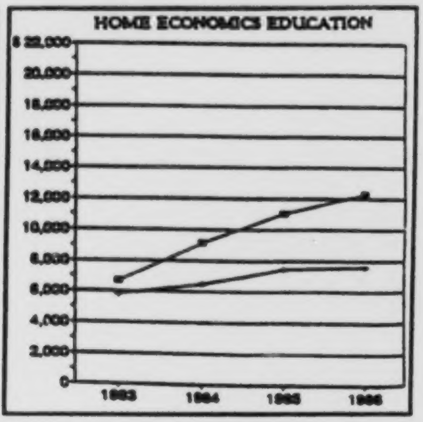
The same pattern was found: "predominantly higher incomes of vocational graduates than others in the general population who are of the same age and years of schooling," and a "general widening of the margin" from 1983 to 1986 between their incomes and the incomes of the comparable group.

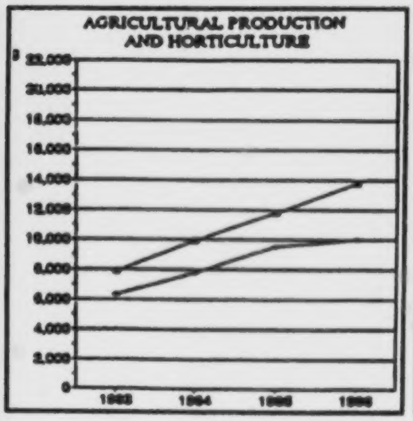


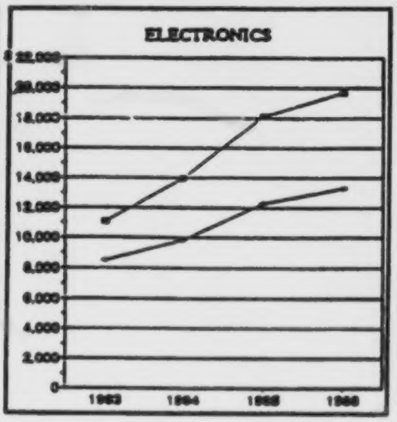
For copies of *1979 Vocational Education Graduates in 1986: A Longitudinal Study Based on Federal Income Tax Data*, by I. A. Ghazalah, contact the Ohio Department of Education, Division of Vocational and Career Education, 65 South Front Street, Room 907, Columbus, Ohio 43266-0308.

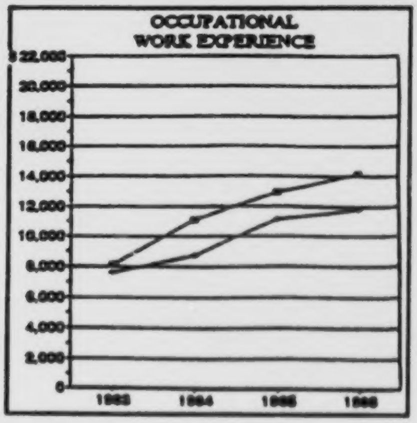












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# Learning to Work Working to Learn

## What school-to-careers is all about

- Today vocational-technical and core academic subjects are being integrated in a curriculum for all students known as school-to-work, school-to-careers, career pathways or occupational clusters. To succeed in high-skill, high-paid career fields today, America's students must be adequately prepared by combining technical education with work-based experience.
- Labor market statistics show that 65% of the top jobs require more than a high school diploma but less than a four-year college degree; 20% of jobs require a bachelor's or higher degree; only 15% will require no occupational skills preparation. For career success, students should leave high school with plans for further education and technical/professional skills training.
- Vocational-technical education encompasses a variety of programs designed to equip students with work and life skills, permit them to explore career options and begin to develop skills in high school that they'll need to be successful in life and in the workplace. Applied classroom and worksite learning programs are being combined with core academic subjects, such as math, science and communication, in the school-to-work curriculum for all students.
- From the vocational-technical curriculum comes a unique combination of classroom instruction, hands-on laboratory work and on-the-job training, augmented by an active network of vocational student organizations. In their VSO activities students acquire the employability and leadership skills and practical experiences that will give them an edge in succeeding in the workforce.

## Preparing for successful careers

- Increasing numbers of young people rely on vocational-technical education to prepare for college and other types of learning beyond high school. Nearly two-thirds of all high school vocational graduates enter some form of postsecondary program.
- Millions of adults enroll in vocational-technical education programs to acquire basic work skills, retrain for new jobs and learn new skills to keep up with technological advances in their jobs and careers.
- Jobs that require more than a high school education, but less than a college degree, are found in more than 400 occupations, including 18 of the 20 fastest growing job fields of the 1990s. In vo-tech programs, students can acquire skills instruction needed for careers as medical assistants, home health aides, data processing equipment repair technicians, financial services sales people and technicians in many other fields.
- Vocational-technical educators work closely with employers to make sure students learn career skills that the labor market demands.

## Success in getting good jobs and top pay

- Studies show it is easier for vocational-technical education graduates to get jobs! A 1991 New York study of 76,000 secondary vocational graduates found that 6 to 18 months after graduation, 91 percent of them were productively employed, in the military or enrolled at postsecondary institutions.
- A recent large-scale study of 13,000 Ohio vocational education graduates found that seven years after high school, the vocational graduates earned significantly more than a comparable group of non-vocational graduates—and the earnings gap between the two groups appeared to widen with time.
- A recent follow-up study of Kansas postsecondary vocational-technical associate degree recipients showed that graduates of the dental hygienist program were earning an average of $34,661 six months after graduation!

  All graduates of the radiation therapy program were employed after six months earning an average salary of $33,120!

  Graduates of 22 occupational programs offered by Kansas community colleges and area vocational-technical schools were earning average salaries of $20,000 or more only six months after graduation.
- In-demand, well-paying occupations that students can begin preparing for in vocational-technical education programs: computer programming and systems repair technicians, biomedical equipment technician, civil technology, energy technology, water and wastewater technology, radiological technology, respiratory therapy technician, associate degree nursing, chemical technology, firefighter and law enforcement

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officers, electrician, aircraft technician, automotive technician, heating and refrigeration technician, electronic technician, business and marketing, health services, retailing and entrepreneurship, high-tech manufacturing and agriculture, technical and consumer services.

## The school-to-careers concept makes sense

- When vocational-technical and academic instruction is integrated in intellectually rigorous courses centered on clusters of occupational skills and interests, the resulting course of study is an academically challenging alternative to the standard college prep regimen. Integrated instruction requires all students to learn and achieve high standards.
- Within school-to-careers systems, tech prep (often called 2 + 2) combines course work in the last two years of high school with related community college or postsecondary technical school education to prepare students for high-skill jobs that require more than a high school diploma. These jobs—in engineering, health occupations, computer services and other technical fields—are among the fastest growing in the nation.
- Companies join with community colleges to establish joint programs to train workers in skills needed by the local businesses. An example is the apprenticeship program Siemens Corp. set up with Seminole Community College and its plant near Orlando, Florida.
- A hands-on approach to teaching—which vocational-technical education brings to school-to-careers systems—has been shown to be more effective with many students than simply reading a textbook or listening to lectures. Students also tend to learn more thoroughly when they can relate what they are learning to their future careers.
- On-the-job training is one approach to hands-on learning. More than a half million students participate in co-op, internship and apprenticeship programs that combine classroom instruction and worksite-based on-the-job learning.
- Vocational-technical education can offer a better chance for educationally disadvantaged students—who often benefit from a curriculum more relevant to student interests and more appealing when taught in hands-on applied exercises.
- Vocational-technical programs take a variety of forms at different levels. Some last up to four years (2 + 2) and offer training in specific technical skills as well as applied academic courses in math, science and communication skills.

  Others are brief and intensive—for example, a customized training program offered by a community college for employees and prospective employees of a particular business.

## Links to business and community

- Because vocational-technical education is so critical to the nation's workforce competitiveness, close ties to business and industry are maintained by schools and instructors. For example, to help keep pace with changing job requirements, technologies and labor market needs in many career areas, vocational-technical educators work closely with advisory councils of local employers from a variety of business fields.
- More than 200,000 representatives from business, industry, labor, government and community groups serve on some 7,300 vocational-technical advisory groups around the country.
- Although federal funds are available to states for school-to-careers systems, community leaders must inform themselves about this resource and then press state and local officials to make sure their schools are getting the help and equipment they need to offer quality school-to-careers programs for all students.

## Where technical education is offered

- Across the country, vocational-technical programs are offered in about 11,000 general or comprehensive high schools, several hundred vocational-technical high schools and about 1,400 secondary level area vo-tech centers, which serve students from several high schools.
- Nearly 9,400 postsecondary institutions offer vocational-technical programs. They include area vocational-technical schools, technical institutes, skill centers and community colleges and other public and private two- and four-year colleges, which offer general academic programs as well.

## Federal legislation and funding

- school-to-careers systems being adopted around the nation are an outgrowth of federal legislation that provided start-up funds to state education departments. And the school-to-career concept is being widely supported by states and localities because it is recognized as an important and beneficial education reform that will benefit America's economy.

## Where to get more information

For details about school-to-careers and vocational-technical education in your community, contact officials of your local public school system, a local vocational-technical school, community college or technical institute. Also, your state department of education should have a division dedicated to school-to-careers and to vocational-technical education.

For more information about this fact sheet, contact the American Vocational Association, 1410 King St., Alexandria, VA 22314. Phone: 800-826-9972.

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# Questions & Answers

*Typical questions about school-to-work and vocational-technical education...*
*With tips on how to provide answers that will gain the confidence and support of your audience.*

**Q.** How will the school-to-work system contribute to the economic development of our area?

**A.** Basically by producing a better prepared workforce. That attracts today's high tech businesses. Many companies join with high schools and community colleges to establish joint programs to train students and workers in skills needed by local businesses.

An example is the apprenticeship program that Siemens Corp. set up with Seminole Community College and its plant near Orlando, Florida. Graduates receive an associate degree from the college and usually also a job with the company.

Technical instruction also helps workers upgrade their skills and get re-trained if they lose their jobs.

*[**Note:** Your school or advisory council may have local statistics that you can cite about the number of adults who participate in local skills training programs and examples of how local companies have worked with local schools to provide customized training. Also, you may know of an industry that came to your area, at least in part because of the workforce education and training capacity of the local school system.]*

**Q.** Do current vocational-technical education courses reflect changes in skills needed by local industry and the needs of the workplace here?

**A.** Because vocational-technical education is so critical to the nation's workforce competitiveness, close ties to business and industry are maintained by school administrators and instructors.

For example, to help keep pace with changing job requirements, technologies and labor market needs in many career areas, vocational-technical educators work closely with advisory councils of local employers from a variety of business fields.

More than 200,000 representatives from business, industry, labor, government and community groups serve on these advisory groups around the country.

*[**Note:** Offer some information about your school system's advisory councils and other links with business and industry.]*

**Q.** What evidence is there that graduates who have taken vocational-technical studies have advantages in the job market over other graduates?

**A.** Studies of placement rates, salary levels, the amount of time spent unemployed and advancement rates of graduates all show this. For example, a recent large-scale study of 13,000 Ohio vocational education graduates found that seven years after high school, the vocational graduates earned significantly more than a comparable group of non-vocational graduates—and the earnings gap between the two groups appeared to widen with time.

Another study, of Kansas postsecondary vocational-technical associate degree recipients, showed that graduates of the dental hygienist program were earning an average of $34,661 six months after graduation!

*[**Note:** If your school has statistics on its graduates, cite them to localize the statistics.]*

**Q.** How has vocational-technical education contributed to the academic success of secondary students?

**A.** National studies show that nearly two-thirds of all high school vocational graduates enter some form of postsecondary program.

Vocational-technical education programs encourage high school graduates to continue their education. For example, within school-to-work systems, tech prep links course work in the last two years of high school with related education programs at community colleges or postsecondary technical schools.

A 1991 New York study of 76,000 secondary vocational graduates found that 6 to 18 months after graduation, 91 percent of them were employed, in the military or enrolled at postsecondary institutions.

A hands-on approach to teaching—which vocational-technical education brings to school-to-work systems—has been shown to be more effective with many students because they learn more when what they are learning relates to their future careers.

When vocational-technical and academic instruction is integrated in intellectually rigorous courses centered on clusters of occupational skills and interests, the resulting course of study is an academically challenging alternative to the standard college prep regimen.

*[**Note:** From your school statistics, note the percentage of local vocational-technical students completing high school and going on to further education. Also, if you have strong integrated programs at your school, describe them and give examples of students' success with them. If you have initiated team teaching, cite what vocational and academic teachers have to say about this approach.]*

**Q.** How many students in our area are involved with vocational-technical education at the high school level and at postsecondary levels?

**A.** Nationally, about 97 percent of all high school students take at least one vo-tech course. Nearly 9,400 postsecondary institutions—technical institutes, skill centers, community colleges and other public and private two- and four-year colleges and universities—offer vocational-technical programs. And millions of adults are enrolled in these programs.

*[**Note:** Be prepared to also present local enrollment data that your school system should have available.]*

**Q.** I want my child to go to college. Won't vocational-technical courses put him/her on the wrong track?

**A.** First, vocational studies do not discourage going to college. In fact, vocational-technical education can help students focus their career aspirations so that they'll be better students in post-high school institutions. And some students are able to pay their way through college in part-time jobs for which their vocational studies prepared them.

All students should have options—to finish high school and go to college or to go to work first and then college. School-to-work is all about eliminating different tracks for different students and providing relevant academic and vocational-technical instruction and career guidance for all students.

In fact, tech prep programs commit students to continue their education beyond high school by linking high school and college courses. This is similar to the way advanced placement programs allow students to do some college level work while still in high school.

*[**Note:** Tell about local tech prep programs and the schools involved.]*

**Q.** Why would a student ever benefit by not getting a college degree?

**A.** Look at what the national statistics tell us: Less than half of all students who enroll in college earn a four-year degree. Job market analysts say that only 20% of America's jobs require a bachelor's degree or higher education. But 65% of good jobs that can provide wonderful careers require something less than four years of college. Only 15% of America's jobs are available to people without skills training.

Many careers can be launched with a two-year college associate degree—for example, in medical and health services (nurses, medical technicians, dental hygienists), as well as manufacturing and service technician fields (computer systems technician, graphic arts designer, aircraft mechanic, engineering technician).

*[**Note:** Ask if the policymaker knows of a four-year college graduate with a bachelor's, or even a master's degree, who is working as a retail salesperson, receptionist, restaurant waiter or waitress, or in business services telemarketing. These are jobs they could have landed without expending the time or money for schooling beyond community college. Also point out that by exposing students to long-range career thinking in high school, their future educational plans will be more focused, and they'll be more likely to get the jobs for which they prepare.]*

**Q.** Which students benefit most from vocational-technical education? Boys? Girls? Minorities?

**A.** These programs serve all students. For instance, girls benefit by taking courses that help them get into non-traditional career fields, such as auto technician and computer-assisted manufacturing. And studies have shown that vo-tech programs make a positive difference for dropout-prone and other educationally disadvantaged students.

*[**Note:** Use local enrollment statistics to show the percentages of male, female and minority students in vocational-technical programs.]*

**Q.** Are students with disabilities able to participate in these programs?

**A.** Yes, vocational-technical programs are accessible to all students. The law requires equality of access.

A recent study of 8,000 students with disabilities showed that those in vocational-technical programs were more likely than those who were not to have better attendance, stay in school, attend postsecondary vocational programs and have a job after two years.

*[**Note:** Perhaps you can show positive statistics from your school system about postsecondary education and job placement for disabled students.]*

**Q.** Why is federal funding through block grants important to school-to-work systems locally?

**A.** Traditionally, Congress has provided support for vocational-technical education because its success has a positive impact on the nation's economy and the competitiveness of the American workforce. The money provided by the federal government is only a small percentage of your local school budget, but often it can make the difference in a school system's ability to purchase the high-tech instructional equipment and training services needed to keep vocational-technical instruction on the leading edge of technology.

*[**Note:** If you know of examples of how federal grant money has helped a particular local program, cite them.]*

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# EDUCATION FOR A NEW ERA

*As the 21st century nears, let's trade our old education model for total integration of work and learning*

By James L. Hoerner

We are at a point where we need to totally rethink the basic scheme, the basic purpose, the basic paradigm of our schooling process in this country.

We now need total systemic change. Our western model of education was designed primarily by Plato to sort out a few to be the leaders, administrators, politicians, CEOs, supervisors and teachers who would control the masses. Certainly this is no longer adequate. As futurist Peter Drucker said last year, we'll soon be relying most on "knowledge workers" who can apply what they know. In the new era, it will be not what you know that counts but what you can do with what you know.

As we redesign the schooling process in this country we need to keep in mind several facts:

- First, 25 percent of American youth do not complete high school.
- Second, according to national education statistics, only about 22 percent of our young people complete a four-year college/university degree.
- Third, the composition of the workforce is changing. In 1950, 20 percent of workers were professional, 20 percent were skilled and 60 percent were unskilled, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. By 2000, 20 percent still will be professional, but the ratio of skilled to unskilled workers reverses—only 15 percent of the workforce will be unskilled and 65 percent will be skilled.

## What has to be done

Can we truly change the educational system? As Sue Berryman and Tom Bailey said in 1992, we must change the mission of schools to take "educational responsibility for the economic futures of all students."

For the first time in history, the business of education to prepare everyone for successful living has become too important to leave only to educators. We now must form partnerships that involve every sector in developing an education process that is meaningful and relevant to all young people. Whether we are educators at the elementary, secondary, community college or university level; leaders of business, industry or labor; parents or community leaders, we all have a vested interest in the economic futures of our young people.

Change does not happen until we ask ourselves some of the right questions. The obvious, basic question is: *What should be the purpose of the schooling process?* Until all educators, PTAs and other parent groups and community and business/industry leaders hold extensive discussions on this question, we will not produce much change in our education system. It is imperative that the "makers of the educators," the colleges and schools of teacher education, also have extensive discussions on this same important question.

Next, we need to ask: *Is the schooling process more about acquiring knowledge or what students can do as a result of the knowledge acquired?*

One of the most interesting and challenging questions is: *Who determines—and how is it determined—what should be taught and therefore learned in the schooling process?* For example, who determines how much math and what math should be learned to live a successful life? Do the textbook writers decide how much and what kind of math should be learned? Do the scientists decide what should be taught in science? Where are the studies that show the levels of mathematics, for example, that one should know to perform as a medical doctor or lawyer? My own medical doctor and dentist laugh when I ask them if they use algebra on a daily or frequent basis to perform their professions.

When are we going to study the levels of mathematics that are necessary to perform various occupations and then structure a schooling process that teaches to such levels for the various careers? Or do we just want to keep using math as one of the main sorting devices to determine those who will get the opportunity to pursue various professions?

As a university professor, I have not used algebra to perform my various duties and tasks in the last 21 years. Of course, there are professors in engineering and physics who need algebra and many other advanced mathematical skills. But what is the rationale for trying to get everyone to learn algebra when, as Willard Daggett and others suggest, 95 percent of all occupations do not require algebra?

Conversely, why should students heading for work in the trades be exempted from higher-level math? As a carpenter and cabinet maker, I used algebra and geometry to determine proper angles, efficient cutting of materials and the like.

Is a school's curriculum based on what is needed to live successful lives or are we trying to determine who gets to go to college and have certain opportunities that others can't have? If math were taught as a tool to be applied, more young people would find the subject easier to learn.

Since the level of math and science to perform most careers is not that difficult, the "80 percent rule" probably applies. If math and science are taught right, 80 percent of our young people probably could learn what it takes to perform at least 80 percent of the jobs and careers in our society.

## The missing component

Spending fall term of 1993 studying the work-based learning systems of several countries in Europe—primarily Germany, Austria, Switzerland and England—has deepened my concern over the current education system in the United States. At the secondary level we continue to emphasize preparation for college and don't ask young people what they are going to do to make a living as adults. College, therefore, becomes a goal instead of a process. As Marc Tucker and others have said, this country more than any other industrialized country continues to stress the pursuit of college as the ideal for all students.

**PURSUIT OF ACADEME: Our elite model of education dates back to the Greeks, who believed a select few should be schooled to lead the masses. We now require a model that gives all young people skills for work.**

In the U.S., work-based learning for all young people is one of the major missing components. What percent of 16- to 19-year-olds in the U.S. have decided what they want to do? Probably below 20 percent. What percent of 16- to 19-year-olds in Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden and Austria have decided what they want to do? At least 70 percent—since 70 percent or more are already in some type of apprenticeship getting qualified for a career.

What are we doing in this great country with an education system that produces such a large number of teenagers not qualified for anything and not knowing what they want to do?

Another major problem is that the majority of educators at all levels, including universities, still believe they are to teach content, disseminate knowledge and sort out the high achievers— "content merchants," someone once said. Most educators do not believe there needs to be a connection between what they do in the classroom and their students' futures as productive individuals.

> MY OWN MEDICAL DOCTOR AND DENTIST LAUGH WHEN I ASK THEM IF THEY USE ALGEBRA ON A DAILY OR FREQUENT BASIS TO PERFORM THEIR PROFESSIONS.

Until we make this philosophical change throughout the schooling process we will be only "curriculum tinkering" with tech prep, integration of academic and vocational education and other initiatives.

We must develop a schooling process that leads to successful school-to-work transition for *all* students. The School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 defines all students to include both the disadvantaged and the academically talented. School-to-work must be viewed as a process for the future medical doctor, lawyer, physicist, school teacher, carpenter, nurse and electronics technician—not only for those careers that do not require college or university work. Anything short of this and school-to-work will just become a new name for vocational education.

As Larry Rosenstock, executive director of the Rindge School of Technical Arts in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and others have stressed, all students need a work-related education.

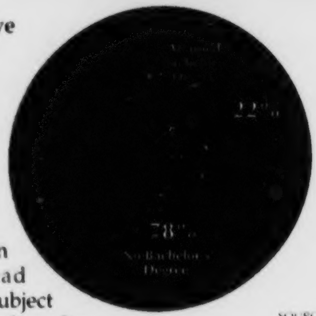
## What is work-based learning?

There are at least two definitions for work-based learning. The first and more traditional definition is "those kinds of learning experiences and activities based in some type of work setting or simulated work setting, such as apprenticeship, internship, co-op and career academies." School-based enterprises and other school-based experiences may have to be adequate when local employment settings are not available.

The second definition is the one that is getting little attention as yet: "The knowledge/learning imparted to every student from the beginning of schooling that maintains a theme or focus that people work in order to live and that there is a positive "connectedness" between the schooling process and living productive lives." I draw this from a book I co-authored with Jim Wehrley in 1995, *Work-based Learning: The Key to School-to-Work Transition*. This second definition is the one that must be emphasized throughout the schooling process by every educator, parent and adult.

Many argue that learning must be broader than just work. Of course, most of us agree that adults have many roles other than working to make a living—parenting, citizenry, partnerships and the like. However, if you can't make a living, you can't be successful at these other adult roles.

As the great academician Alfred North Whitehead said in 1929, "Teaching subject matter unconnected to real applications only produces 'inert,' useless knowledge." Harvard professor Howard Gardner echoed this belief recently at a national school-to-work conference in Boston.



BY DEGREE

*In 1993, only 22 percent of 25-year-olds in the U.S. had completed four years of college or more.*

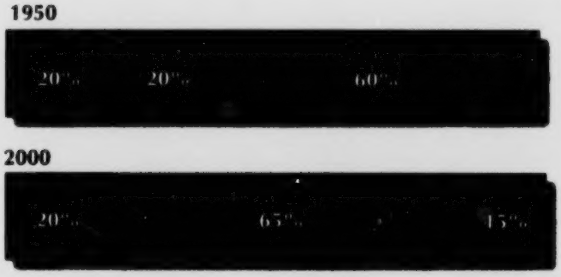
SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, "Mini-Digest of Education Statistics," 1994

If applied knowledge is of utmost importance, then where and when did the concept of knowledge acquisition devoid of application begin? How did we move from showing our children how to perform a skill in the field to filling their heads with facts in a classroom? Perhaps we can blame Plato and his elitist model. We have long since left the time when a small minority—the offspring of the wealthy and powerful—were schooled to prepare for mostly high-minded, philosophical pursuits. How much longer will we tolerate an irrelevant system of education?

## How vo-tech must change

Vocational-technical education is not excluded from this restructuring sphere. We also need to make several improvements, and here are suggestions for getting started:

1. We cannot continue to argue that vocational education is so unique and different that it should be set aside and treated differently from other aspects of the learning process. Vocational educators have perpetuated this separatism and dualism of "vocational" versus "academic." Each side is guilty of keeping the concept of "teaching for learning" separate from "teaching for doing." This, no doubt, is a result of separate legislation, removed facilities, different teacher certification standards and the tendency to sort students by academic abilities.



■ Professional
■ Skilled
■ Unskilled

THE CHANGING WORKFORCE

*Employers' needs today are far different from 1950, when most available jobs did not require special skills.*

SOURCE: AVA Guide to the School-to-Work Opportunities Act, 1994 (from Bureau of Labor Statistics)

2. Vocational educators need to get over the fear of losing identity. We are showing our insecurities by wanting to be separate and treated differently. As a result, such insecurity is passed to vocational students, who end up feeling second class. Vocational educators have tremendous substance to offer by joining the team.

3. Integrate, integrate, integrate. From observation over the last several years, I sense that vocational educators frequently resist integration more than academic educators. Teachers of math, science, communications and social studies are looking for ways to teach in an applied, relevant manner, and vocational educators should seize the opportunity to help.

4. Raise academic levels and expectations of all students. Where did we get the idea that students who were having trouble with math should be in a "shop" class? In fact, a number of industrial technology fields require higher math than professional fields.

5. Modernize. Too many old vocational areas are still old vocational shops. Let's align with the modern American workforce setting.

6. Link with business and industry in every way possible. Vocational educators ought to be best at contacting employers, networking with community agencies and setting up work experiences of all sorts for all students.

As Rindge director Rosenstock says, we must stop the dual tracking system: "If any student should experience work-related education, then all students should experience it. Otherwise those students who experience work education and those who don't are kept in separate tracks."

## FUNDAMENTALS FOR EDUCATION OVERHAUL

- **We must stop letting the college-bound curriculum drive the total schooling process when 70 percent of all jobs by 2000 will not require a four-year college degree.**
- **We must change our terminology and stop asking students, "Are you going to work or to college?" I am not sure what this implies except to suggest college-bound students don't need to think about work. Instead of asking, "Are you going to college?", we should ask all young people, "What career are you interested in?" Only then can we help students build pathways of learning that lead to productive work.**
- Let's help all young people recognize that the primary source of making a living is work and that schooling is the major process for achieving that. Going to college is part of the process for only certain careers—approximately 20 percent of the workforce.
- We must stop the dualisms in education such as "career bound or college bound," "tech prep versus college prep" or "academic versus vocational." Such dualisms only continue to perpetuate the white-collar versus blue-collar elitist mentality.
- Since we are a work-oriented society everyone must have a career destination.
- All students need work-based experiences that give relevancy to their learning paths—work-based learning based *on* as well as *in* work.
- We must develop an education system that assumes responsibility for all students' economic futures.

The new economy no longer values the distinction or difference between "thinkers" and "doers."

What if, threaded throughout the schooling process, there was an obvious, visible goal to become productive and to make a "positive connection" between school and making a living? What would this do for learners? This is the challenge we face as we redesign the schooling process for the 21st century.

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## NOTES

# A Model Reform

*Across the country school systems are making drastic changes to better prepare students for life after high school. To combat accusations of irrelevance, more secondary districts are turning to career-oriented programs to make education useful and valuable for all students.*

By Marlene Lozada
Photos by Saed Hindash

Fourteen-year-olds in the United States by law are too young to vote, too young to drink alcoholic beverages and too young to go to war. In most states, 14-year-olds are too young to buy cigarettes, too young to get married and too young to drive a car. If they're not mature enough for any of these, then can 14-year-olds—usually freshmen in high school—make career decisions?

"They're making the decision to drop out of school, to get involved in gangs and drugs, all kinds of things," says Nancy Hargis, an Oregon school-to-work specialist. "Kids make decisions about the classes they're going to take and that directly affects them when they leave high school."

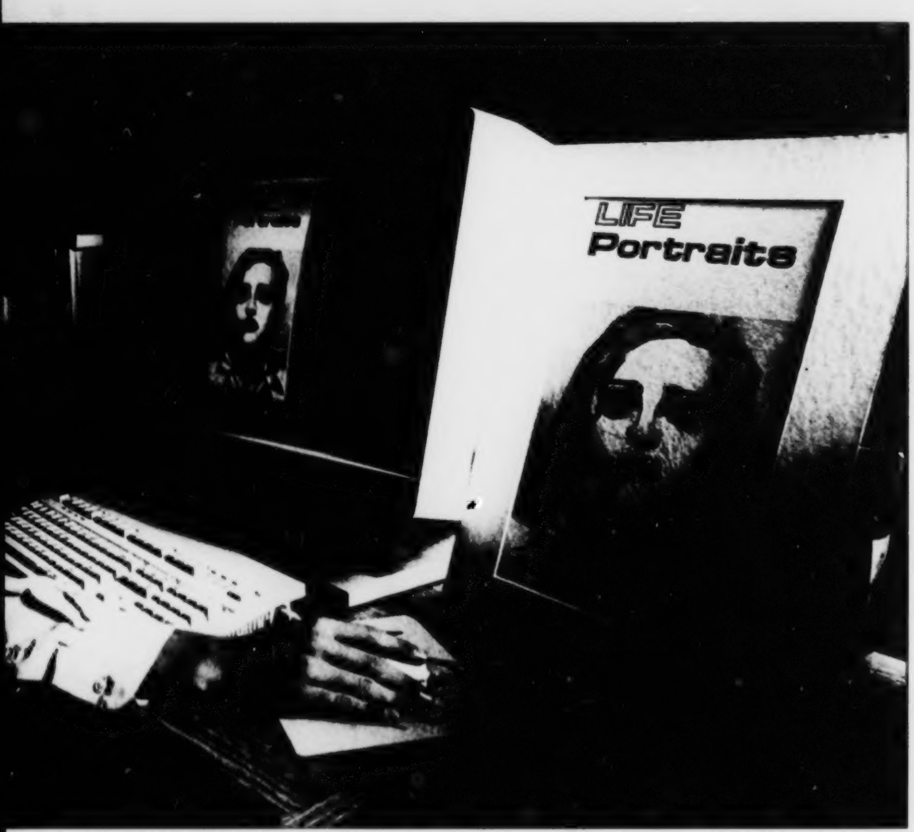
Recognizing that secondary students often opt for college with little thought given to careers—or else make no decision about their futures—some states are trying entirely new ways of organizing education. Oregon is one of at least 10 states implementing "career clusters" in one or more school districts. Also known as career paths, endorsement areas and personal academic careers (PACS), career clusters are areas of workforce specialization that aim to integrate academic and career education by guiding students into and through particular avenues of study.

This concept is a radical departure from the decades-old approach to secondary education in this country, which has been to track students into college prep *or* "career" education. States that have implemented clusters want to eliminate this split and instead emphasize education directed toward a career goal.

Although each career cluster program varies from state to state and even from school to school, the premise is basically the same. After some form of assessment in eighth or ninth grade, high school students choose a cluster of courses related to their career interests. During the rest of high school, students follow programs of study that are specific to certain jobs. Before graduation, they should have had some type of job site experience—an internship, externship, job shadowing activity or apprenticeship, for example. Graduates can continue their career cluster education as part of major studies at the postsecondary level—at a university, community college or technical school—or can join the workforce directly, presumably more prepared for the occupation of their choice. But is all of this too much too soon? Do 14-year-old students really know what they want to be "when they grow up?"

## Issues surface early

"I think we may be misleading ourselves in thinking that it is appropriate or necessary to have kids, particularly at the high school level, choose careers," says Gary Hoachlander, director of national planning and evaluation for the National Center for Research in Vocational Education (NCRVE) and president of



**Great Oaks senior Phil Jackson works on a scanned computer image of his drawing as part of the commercial art program in the art, printing and communications cluster.**

MPR Associates in Berkeley, California. "I absolutely believe it's a good idea to encourage high school kids to learn academic material in the context of work, but to assume that these kids should know what they want to do 10 to 15 years from now is in many ways misleading. The idea (of career clusters) seems to me to be a little strange."

Cliff Migal, executive vice president and chief operating officer of the Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development in Cincinnati, Ohio, maintains that the "too much, too soon" argument is not an issue because career cluster curricula are broad-based. Great Oaks, which provides vocational-technical education to 36 comprehensive high schools in the Cincinnati area, implements an 11-group cluster matrix among its four campuses. The matrix includes art, printing and communications; automotive and power; business and marketing; construction and maintenance; electronics; food and hospitality; health; manufacturing; personal care; plant and animal care; and safety.

"This is a broad-based approach," Migal says. "You acquire the skills for the occupational area. At the same time you're acquiring skills that can help you in any occupation you want to go into. In the cluster approach, your job opportunities probably quadruple. It's a benefit to the industry and it's a benefit to the young person."

NCRVE recognized Great Oaks in 1991 as one of 15 exemplary vocational institutions in the United States, and the school has earned a national reputation as a leader in establishing business and industry partnerships. In a survey of its 1993 graduates, Great Oaks found that 95 percent of that class was either employed or pursuing further education. So it seems the career cluster approach is "working" in Ohio. But circumstances are different in all of the states and districts now attempting this reform.

> "IN THE CLUSTER APPROACH, YOUR JOB OPPORTUNITIES PROBABLY QUADRUPLE. IT'S A BENEFIT TO THE INDUSTRY AND IT'S A BENEFIT TO THE YOUNG PERSON."
>
> —GREAT OAKS EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT CLIFF MIGAL

Great Oaks, for example, has the benefit of concentrating solely on vocational education and career preparation. And, even though it is the largest vocational school district in the U.S., it serves only about 3,000 high school students. Fairfax County, Virginia, which plans to implement career clusters in fall 1996, serves nearly 40,000 high school students and may face an unlikely obstacle to restructuring: it's long-held reputation for academic excellence.

St. Mary's County, Maryland, which served as one of many career cluster examples for Fairfax County, includes a "college/university" cluster in its matrix, which might suggest the same old tracking system. For its plan, Oregon consulted Woodland High School in Woodland, California, which has been implementing some version of career clusters for almost eight years.

Like Oregon, Woodland has six "clusters" in its system, while Fairfax and St. Mary's counties have four and Great Oaks has 11. Delaware's three vocational-technical districts switched to career clusters in 1990, although each school may choose its own.

Various Washington school districts are far along in cluster implementation. Bethel School District in Tacoma introduced five career paths in 1990. Its first class to have fully traveled those paths will graduate in 1997.

The businesses and industries in each geographic area play a big role in determining the career clusters included in each program. For example, Fairfax County will not include an agriculture program in its clusters because there is not a demand for those occupations in northern Virginia. But regardless of demographics, business and industry demands or student populations, each of these initiatives has a common goal—to make school more relevant for all students by providing them with career-oriented education and preparation.

How many states or districts are moving ahead with career cluster reforms? It appears that no organization has kept an official tally, but *Journal* research has turned up 10 (see box on page 31).

## Birth of a program

Economics and the realities of an emerging global marketplace are the factors driving this facet of school reform. In a speech in August 1994, U.S. Secretary of Labor Robert Reich put a fine point on

# CAREER CLUSTERS

*Fairfax County will implement these four career clusters at its 23 high schools in fall 1996. Career exploration also will begin at the elementary and middle school levels. According to Fairfax County's implementation timeline, at least two highly specialized career academies will be open by the year 2000. The professional fields and jobs listed here are just a portion of what is included in each cluster under the full plan.*

## COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARTS

### PROFESSIONAL FIELDS

- Photography
- Public Relations
- Radio
- Journalism
- Visual Arts
- Virtual Reality
- Interactive Multimedia
- Television
- Film
- Live Performance

### JOB EXAMPLES

Musician
Choreographer
Interior Designer
Costume Designer
Reporter
Curator
Photographer
Fashion Designer
Actor
Dancer
Set Designer
Makeup Artist
Artist
Editor
Producer
Director
Agent
Researcher

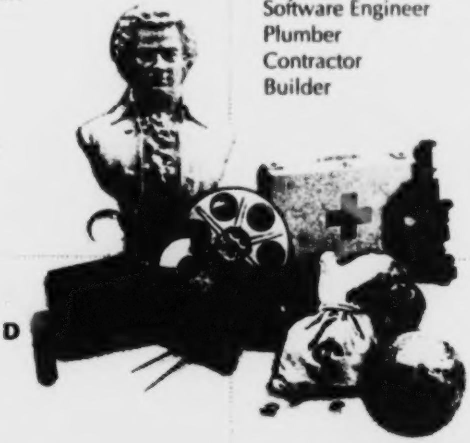
## ENGINEERING, INDUSTRIAL AND SCIENTIFIC TECHNOLOGY

### PROFESSIONAL FIELDS

- Architecture
- Electronics
- Engineering
- Automotive
- Manufacturing
- Building Trades
- Horticulture
- Transportation
- Construction
- Physical Science

### JOB EXAMPLES

Environmental Planner
Surveyor
Software Engineer
Plumber
Contractor
Builder
Landscape Architect
Aerospace Engineer
Inspector
Machinist
Mechanic
Auto Body Technician
Mason
Electrician
Electrical Engineer
Diagnostic Technician



## HEALTH, HUMAN AND PUBLIC SERVICES

### PROFESSIONAL FIELDS

- Education
- Counseling
- Health Care
- Child Care
- Dental
- Hotel
- Government
- Law
- Consumer Affairs
- Research

### JOB EXAMPLES

Home Health Aide
Physician
Educator
Child Care Provider
Psychologist
Dentist
Dental Assistant
Police Officer
Speech Therapist
Nurse
Dietitian
Veterinarian
Caterer
Emergency Medical Technician
Physical Therapist
Human Resources
Biomedical Technician
Cosmetologist

## BUSINESS AND MARKETING

### PROFESSIONAL FIELDS

- Sales
- Public Relations
- Finance
- Advertising
- Telecommunications
- Hotel and Restaurant
- Network Systems
- Travel and Tourism
- Insurance
- Foreign Service

### JOB EXAMPLES

Purchasing Agent
Travel Agent
Sales Associate
Market Researcher
Office Manager
Loan Officer
Merchandiser
Stockbroker
Auditor
Programmer
Economist
Personnel Manager
Systems Analyst
Meeting Planner
Administrative Support
Buyer
Image Consultant
Comptroller

it: "The average worker is becoming less and less relevant...The fundamental fault line running through today's workforce is based on education and skills." Earlier that same year, U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley challenged schools to work more closely with industry and business leaders. He said U.S. students risked becoming irrelevant without changes in traditional schooling.

Meanwhile, Fairfax County—an affluent, nationally recognized school district serving more than 143,000 K-12 students in northern Virginia—had decided to review its vocational education programs. What resulted, however, is along the lines of the full-scale reform that these leaders envisioned.

"We started looking at how we might be able to restructure the vocational programs and bring more focus to what we were doing," says Teresa Fleming, director of professional technical studies in Fairfax County. "As we started moving more into it, it wasn't just a matter of looking at what we were doing with the vocational programs but what we were doing countywide for all students to bring in more career preparation."

Comprising academic and vocational educators, parents, training specialists and administrators, a 38-person career and technical preparation task force embarked on 13 months of study. They found that although 92 percent of Fairfax County graduates move on to postsecondary education, only 55 percent of Virginia students at four-year institutions actually graduate. Fairfax County may boast a low dropout rate and high SAT scores on a national level, but the task force concluded that a traditional liberal arts education no longer was enough to prepare students for life after high school. It studied the career cluster programs in several other states and came up with four career clusters of its own—business and marketing; communications and the arts; engineering, industrial and scientific technology; and health, human and public services (see facing page).

"I think the problem with the vocational programs in the past is that we were so job specific," Fleming says. "We need to start looking at broad fields. We took what a lot of other people had done and basically narrowed ours down into four (clusters), which to us represent just about any job you could ever imagine."

A student interested in electronics, for example, would enter the engineering, industrial and scientific technology cluster. Within the cluster, that student can choose from engineering, mechanical and construction electives—such as computer graphics, auto technology and welding—to take in addition to core academic classes like language arts, U.S. history or world studies (see page 32).

Junior Michael Butts (left) and senior Mike Mingus practice counting pills and filling out prescriptions as part of the pharmacy technician training program at Great Oaks.

## WHERE THE CLUSTERS ARE

*The following list of career cluster sites is a result of research done by Journal staff. Any school or school system implementing or planning a version of career clusters that is not on this list is encouraged to send its information to the Journal, 1410 King St., Alexandria, VA 22314.*

- Fairfax County Public Schools, Virginia
- Connecticut Public Schools
- Washington (various districts)
- Oregon Public Schools
- Mississippi Public Schools
- Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development, Cincinatti, Ohio
- Delaware Vocational-Technical Schools
- California (various districts)
- St. Mary's County Public Schools, Maryland
- Arizona (various districts)

"Technical studies are for everybody," Fairfax County Superintendent Robert "Bud" Spillane says. "I see the four clusters as opportunities for youngsters. Our focus is school-to-work. There's no such thing as some people go to work and some people go to college. Everybody goes to work."

In addition to the clusters, which incorporate such programs as tech prep, youth apprenticeship and co-op, the new plan includes forming four professional-technical academies—each offering highly specialized courses for the cluster it represents. Located within or near existing schools, the academies will be furnished with the advanced equipment necessary for occupational specialization. Because Fairfax County is so vast, there will be one career cluster "major" and at least one career cluster "minor" at each academy site. For example, a student could take specialized communications courses at the business and marketing academy, which may be closer to home. But these long-term plans may be a bit idealistic now. Although Fairfax County is considered a financially powerful school district, school-to-work initiatives don't come cheap.

"We're applying locally for one of the school-to-work grants," Fleming says. "We are very hopeful because we are so large and we feel like we're going through a major restructuring here."

Fleming says funds are needed most for equipment such as computers and high-tech machinery, personnel and staff development. The task force projects full program implementation, which also includes career education at the elementary and middle school levels, no sooner than 2000. For now, though, Fairfax

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**Great Oaks animal science and management instructor Bill Stanforth explains dog grooming techniques to student Kelly Adrian.**

County has the crucial support of its school board.

Fleming says that, so far, she has heard no opposition to the career clusters approach. She attributes that to the wide spectrum of representatives on the task force and the open lines of communication it has had with business, teachers and PTA groups during the entire process.

"We have to make parents understand that we're not trying to lock students into a career," Fleming says. "We're just trying to get students a little more focused. We all change our interests. Changing clusters is not a problem because the academics are all in place. If you change your mind and decide you're really more interested in another field, you haven't lost anything and it certainly won't kick you back a grade level."

## The customers approve

Career cluster naysayers run scarce in Ohio's Great Oaks system. The educators there pride themselves on turning out a quality product. Teachers must sign off on each student's specific job competencies as part of a career passport students receive when they complete a program. Every Great Oaks graduate joins the workforce under warranty—satisfaction guaranteed up to one full year or free retraining of that employee. There are more than 1,200 business and industry representatives, educators, parents and Cincinnati citizens on advisory committees that monitor each program on a four-year cycle. There are nearly 60 specific job paths within the 11 career clusters. But Great Oaks could be considered an anomaly—a career preparation world of its own.

"I chose to come here because I wanted a good career opportunity," says 17-year-old Kisha Zellner, a senior in the dental assisting program. With an air of youthful confidence, Zellner could very well represent the popular image of the average teenager, but she doesn't. Dressed in neatly pressed scrubs, Zellner knows exactly where she's going with her career and how she's getting there. When exclusively at her comprehensive high school, her grade point average meandered around a 1.5, but now that she feels her studies have a purpose, she's cruising along with a 3.5 average.

"This school is really great with all of the

## CAREER CLUSTER CASE STUDIES

*Under the Fairfax County plan, most core academic classes are taken in ninth and tenth grade. By senior year, five of seven classes should be specialized courses from the cluster curriculum a student has chosen. These schedules are for 21-credit diplomas and are only examples of many potential course combinations in different clusters.*

| | ENGINEERING, INDUSTRIAL & SCIENTIFIC TECHNOLOGY<br>*This cluster provides for three areas of study—engineering, mechanical and construction. This example focuses on engineering.* | | COMMUNICATIONS & THE ARTS<br>*This cluster provides for two areas of study—production and performance. This example focuses on production.* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9TH GRADE | • Language Arts<br>• P.E. and Health<br>• World Studies I<br>• Math (Algebra I or II) | • Science (Earth Science or Biology)<br>• Intro to Engineering*<br>• Engineering Drawing* | • Language Arts<br>• P.E. and Health<br>• World Studies I<br>• Math (Algebra I or II) | • Science (Earth Science or Biology)<br>• Journalism*<br>• Information Systems* |
| | • Language Arts<br>• P.E. and Health<br>• Social Studies or Foreign Language<br>• Fine or Practical Arts | • Math (Algebra II or Geometry)<br>• Science (Biology or Chemistry)<br>• Principles of Technology* | • Language Arts<br>• P.E. and Health<br>• Social Studies or Foreign Language<br>• Fine or Practical Arts | • Math (Algebra II or Geometry)<br>• Science (Biology or Chemistry)<br>• Commercial Photography* |
| 11TH GRADE | • Language Arts<br>• U.S. History<br>• Math or Science<br>• Design and Technology* | • Desktop/Multimedia Presentations*<br>• Information Systems*<br>• Electronics* | • Language Arts<br>• U.S. History<br>• Math or Science<br>• Computer Graphics* | • Television Production*<br>• Keyboarding*<br>• Basic Technical Drawing* |
| | • Language Arts<br>• U.S. Government<br>• Media Focus 2-D*<br>• Computer Graphics* | • Discrete Mathematics*<br>• Speech Communication*<br>• Business Management* | • Language Arts<br>• U.S. Government<br>• Media Marketing*<br>• Creative Writing* | • Desktop/Multimedia Presentations*<br>• Portfolio Preparation*<br>• Graphic Design* |

*Denotes career cluster elective

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facilities that it has," says senior Nanae Ogawa, a medical assisting student. "It's like you're really in the hospital."

Ogawa hopes to return to her native Japan to practice medical assisting with the added advantage of being bilingual. She says she has no qualms about choosing a career at the age of 17. Her advice to other high school students is straightforward.

"No matter what you like to do, pick one aspect that you're interested in and go for it," Ogawa says with knowledgeable conviction. "A lot of people graduate from high school and go to college, but they're lost. They really don't know what to do in the future."

Great Oaks Career Specialist Rosemary Marshall is an important source of information for students. She guides students like Zellner and Ogawa, making sure they take effective paths toward their career goals. "My statement to every young person and parent always is, 'We're not trying to have you decide what you're going to be doing when you're 25 years old. But you've got to start somewhere.' Unless you take a step forward, you're never going to make any decisions about what you do."

Leon Montgomery, a senior concentrating in personal computer technology, started his Great Oaks career in the auto mechanics program. But after about a month he changed his mind. He says he was able to apply what he already had learned about electronics to the new cluster, so he didn't feel behind.

Upon entering a Great Oaks career cluster from their "home school," students make a two-week commitment. If after two weeks they are unhappy or feel they have made a bad decision, they may return full-time to their home school or switch programs. This two-week trial period is why senior commercial art student Phil Jackson gave Great Oaks a try.

"I thought it was a good deal because it wasn't like I signed a contract and it would take me a year to go back if I wanted to," Jackson says. Now he represents Great Oaks in art contests, he's a Great Oaks tour guide and his sights are set on a bachelor's degree. "I admire people who come here to make something out of themselves," Jackson says. "I used to hate going to school. But when you see that you're good at something, you want to be more active and see how far you can get."

These Great Oaks students don't feel as though they're missing out on anything by not attending their comprehensive high schools full-time. Zellner is an active member of several clubs and Montgomery is still on the wrestling and track teams. The way Montgomery sees it, he's "just getting a head start on what other kids are going to be doing in a few years anyway."

## The academic argument

As a vocational district, Great Oaks is focused on career preparation. But what happens when a comprehensive secondary education system moves in that direction?

Statistically speaking, Fairfax County's academic ducks all are in order. SAT scores are up and the gifted and talented and advanced placement programs are thriving. So although career cluster implementation is the newest representative of academic and vocational education integration, core academic classes will not change. A biology course for a student in the health, human and public services cluster, for example, will not differ from biology for a student in the engineering, industrial and scientific technology cluster.

*Continued on page 72*

## SENSORY OVERLOAD

**Providers of vocational education for 36 affiliated school districts, the four sprawling campuses of the Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development in Cincinnati, Ohio, are filled with more than 3,000 high school students on definite career paths. Great Oaks offers highly specialized training for nearly 60 occupations in a matrix of 11 career clusters.**

Anyone who enters a Great Oaks facility would immediately see how different it is from a comprehensive high school. A visitor's eyes are filled with the bright colors of uniforms and the interesting tools or equipment each student may be carrying. Young bodies look comfortable and confident in a state-of-the-art radio and television communications classroom, where students produce a radio show. In the child learning center, lustrous wooden cribs line the walls and cheerful toys and games fill the shelves. There is a waiting list of Great Oaks faculty and community members hoping to have their children cared for there.

Great Oaks Executive Vice President Cliff Migal says the most effective way of selling the career clusters concept to business and industry, students, parents and educators is to have them experience it for themselves.

"You've got to get them out to see it, touch it, feel it," Migal says. "They need to get out to places where it's happening and working."

In a lab, a teacher's dog sits freshly groomed and perfumed by animal science and management students. Part of the plant and animal care cluster, the students run a small grooming business in addition to an in-house pet store that sells fish, mice, gerbils, hamsters, birds and snakes. In the floral/landscape sciences lab, the smell of fresh flowers permeates. Nearby, a steamy greenhouse nurtures growing plants. The floral/landscape sciences students, also part of the plant and animal care cluster, often are asked to make floral arrangements for school and community events or do landscape work for neighboring institutions. "We've got a whole new approach to education, but it's a shared thing," Migal says. "You have to stay in touch with the labor market, which means you have to stay in touch with industry. We make sure we are providing young people with the skills that they need to enter, compete and advance in the labor market."

Students say the state-of-the-art facilities at Great Oaks add to their educational experience. They appreciate the hands-on activities directly related to their chosen careers. Other highly specialized facilities at Great Oaks include labs for equine science, electronics and laser technology, dental assisting, pharmacy technology, commercial baking, aviation maintenance and graphic communications.

"At home school, you just take tests and you pass or you fail," says Nanae Ogawa, a senior in the medical assisting program. "They just make you read a certain chapter and answer some questions. But here you have to use your skills."

**PICTURED ABOVE: Senior medical assisting student Nanae Ogawa (right) practices taking blood pressures on classmate Jamie Hacker, also a senior in that Great Oaks program. Seniors Wayne Fred Denney (front) and John Lock store newly planted poinsettias in the greenhouse as part of Great Oaks' floral and landscape sciences program.**

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## A Model Reform...

*Continued from page 33*

"We have not anticipated putting different types of courses in," Fleming says. "I know throughout the nation they have talked about applied courses. Unfortunately in this area, and many times nationwide, a lot of people think of the word 'applied' as being lower level."

Superintendent Spillane, a strong believer in rigorous academic challenge for all students, is adamant about keeping the academic courses intact. In his vision of academic and vocational integration, it is vocational education that needs to take the broader step toward academics.

"There won't be differences, no double track," Spillane says. "I would say we would hold very firm on that to the extent possible... I see vocational educators as integrating much more with the whole school picture. The academic mission is extremely important and they have a big part in supporting the academic mission and those career clusters as part of it."

In Oregon, where the career cluster equivalents are six endorsement areas, Nancy Hargis says there would be "no way of having six different biology classes." She adds that variations could come in the form of projects, but that students will have to take much more responsibility for themselves and the application of knowledge to their individualized programs. This *laissez faire* treatment of academics is another beef NCRVE's Gary Hoachlander has with the career clusters concept.

"If biology doesn't vary at all, then I don't get it," he says. "There is a danger of viewing clusters as a panacea and shortcut for not doing the very hard work of integrating curriculums and being clear on what you want kids to know. I don't want to diminish their enthusiasm. I'm sure they'll be doing things better than they were before. But on the other hand I'm also worried that they'll implement these clusters, wonder why nothing happened and ~~get~~ discouraged."

St. Mary's County, Maryland, with its version of career clusters up and running since 1991, has tinkered with the academic component of career clusters and has been encouraged by positive results. The county's attendance and standardized test scores are up and the dropout rate has decreased from 8 to 3 percent, says Career and Technology Education Supervisor Stephen Olczak. The education system in St. Mary's County was very different in the late 1980s, Olczak recalls.

"We had created this system for kids to just meander through. We didn't require vocational classes and we didn't require challenging academic classes," Olczak says. "Kids, being smart as a whip, took the easy way through. We knew they could do more. But why should they do more? That led us to the career cluster issue. If kids had a purpose for being here, something they were in pursuit of, they would be more likely to take classes to get to that goal."

Olczak says the academic courses in St. Mary's County are "parallel, but different" depending on the career focus. Academic requirements aren't the same for each cluster. A student in the business/management technologies cluster, for example, could graduate without having to take a biology course.

The St. Mary's County clusters, however, could suggest tracking instead of integration because—in addition to business/management, engineering/mechanical and health/human services technologies—there is a four-year college/university cluster. But many students are in more than one cluster, Olczak says, and being exclusively in the business/management cluster, for example, doesn't rule out the four-year college option because core academic courses are a part of each cluster.

Under the St. Mary's County plan, all seniors have job site experience and at least one-third of them take classes for college credit. Twenty-two of its programs are articulated with a community college or technical institute. And because St. Mary's County has 130,000 fewer students than Fairfax County, it is able to offer most of its specialized courses and training at its technical center.

The success St. Mary's County has experienced with its career clusters implementation has attracted an NBC news team and much support from area business and industry leaders.

Teresa Fleming knows such success doesn't come overnight. Fairfax County has implementation plans that cross over into the new millennium.

"It's really a change in the educational structure," Fleming says. "If it were implemented in the best way, it would take the longest time because you would be starting at the elementary level with career exploration and working your way up. If we do that it's going to take 12 years. We can't wait that long."

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*Marlene Lozada is assistant editor for the Vocational Education Journal.*

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# "Not For My Child"

### SCHOOL-TO-WORK FACES A GROWING BACKLASH FROM NERVOUS PARENTS

**By Chuong-Dai Vo, *Techniques* Contributing Editor**

Angela Mathey is not sure what school-to-work is but she doesn't like what she has read and heard about it so far. Her eighth-grade daughter, Lindsay, attends Oakville Junior High School in Oakville, Missouri. Next spring she will have to choose a career pathway, a cluster of courses that presents academics within an occupational context. "She has no idea what she's going to pick. I think that's pretty normal," says the mother of two. A co-founder of the Mehlville Parents for Academic Excellence, Mathey thinks her daughter is too young to know what she wants to be years from now.

Mathey's concern echoes a growing sentiment among parents nationwide that school-to-work is an unsound educational program and a federal government infringement on local autonomy. Judging from the sources of discontent, the reactions seem to be part of a public skepticism of high-profile education reforms.

- In Fairfax County, Virginia, parents wrote letters to local newspapers comparing the county's new career pathways approach to socialism and Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto*. Critics accuse the school district of being more interested in turning out workers than critical thinkers.
- In Missouri, nervous parents fear the spread of school-to-careers from the three pilot sites to the rest of the state.
- In Washington, D.C., the national offices of conservative groups like the Eagle Forum and Family Research Council urge their members to oppose federal funding of school-to-work.

Miscommunication—or lack of communication—appears to be fueling the backlash. Mary Breed of Fairfax, Virginia, believes school-to-work pigeonholes students into one career and limits their ability to enroll in college. She expects one of her four children to enter the vocational track and thinks it should be strengthened, not combined with the college prep track. Meanwhile, her 19-year-old son, who is a liberal arts major at University of Virginia, "still doesn't know what he wants to do. It would have been ridiculous for him to pick a career pathway in junior high. It's a very naive system that doesn't make sense or work in reality. Unfortunately, we have a lot of bureaucrats interested in it," she says.

That mindset frustrates school-to-work proponents, who want to eliminate tracks and believe that *all* students can benefit from a career-focused education. Studies show that 50 percent of high school students graduate hardly capable of securing an entry-level job. Of the quarter of high school graduates who acquire a bachelor's degree, many have pursued a liberal arts education devoid of professional skills and eventually have to attend a two-year college for technical training.

To prevent that from happening, proponents say adults must encourage students to think earlier about what they want to do for a living and how they can achieve their goals. This belief is not limited to the education community. A recent American Viewpoint survey of 1,000 people found 83 percent agreed schools should focus on career preparation. Trish McNeil, U.S. assistant secretary of education, notes that parents often will agree with school-to-careers principles such as high academics and a focused education. But launch a system-wide reform based on the principles, and the public recoils.

Robert La Rouche

**Angela Mathey worries that her daughter Lindsay will not receive a sound education within a school-to-careers framework. "They need to educate our children as though they are all going to college," says the mother of two.**

Although there is support for school-to-careers programs, their advocates should keep in mind that past large-scale education initiatives have folded because of protests that started at the grass-roots level.

Education consultant Jack Jennings says the criticism of school reform is multilayered. "There are three different strands [of criticism]: First, public schools are under intense criticism. Two-thirds of households don't have kids in schools, so most people don't have direct contact with schools and get their information from the media, which is very critical of schools. The second strand is conservatives calling public schools government schools, implying they are socialist programs. So conservatives attack outcomes-based education, sex education, psychological education. And they also attack school-to-work. The third strand is that most people want their kids to go to college because they think it will secure them a job," says Jennings, director of the Center on National Education Policy in Washington, D.C. "If school to-work is to survive, it has to convince people that it is opening doors, not closing them. The second thing it has to do is connect to postsecondary institutions."

## Alarm bells ring

Chief elements of the school-to-careers concept—integrated studies and hands-on learning—are not new. But the reform didn't hit the country as a whole until the federal government sanctioned it in 1994 with passage of the School-to-Work Opportunities Act, which has so far awarded more than $700 million to help states and communities revamp their educational systems. The legislation encountered relatively little opposition when it was introduced.

The federal initiative also was a response to complaints from business people about a lack of qualified employees. Given these circumstances, the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor, which jointly run the National School-to-Work Office, decided to tie education quality to the country's economic competitiveness. At the same time, officials have gone to pains to stress that school-to-work is not just another program, much less a vocational one, with federal mandates.

But now that school-to-careers ideas are emerging from their paper cocoons as live programs, many community members are getting their first glimpse. Parents who expected a traditional academic education for their children are sounding alarm bells against practices such as team teaching, group activities, interdisciplinary coursework, applied academics and block scheduling. The skepticism appears to stem from a belief that school-to-work, in expecting the same standards from all students and bringing vocational studies into the core curriculum, will lead to a "dumbing

David Santmyer

**Teresa Fleming (center), director of professional-technical studies in Fairfax County, Virginia, visits a class that uses a hands-on learning approach to engage students' interest.**

down" of academics and stunt the intellectual growth of high achievers.

These same critics suspect that career paths, an integral part of school-to-work programs in many states, are merely another form of vocational education. "The focus is training people to be workers and that's really the German-Soviet model. In this country, people have individual rights and they should not be trained for a specific job," says Kris Ardizzone, legislative director of Eagle Forum. "With the federal government footing the bill, it's no wonder businesses like it so much. And the fact that you put a high school student in a vocational [track] is to say, 'We know you're not college-bound.' That is very discriminatory."

## Unanswered questions

Such interpretations baffle school-to-careers proponents, who stress that their aim is to improve the educational experience for all students—including the college-bound—and not to churn out a mass of drone workers. "When you talk about change, people want to understand how it will affect them," says McNeil, who heads the U.S. Office of Vocational and Adult Education. "Having said that, I believe the criticism is driven by a lack of understanding about school-to-work. It's about going on to postsecondary education. Whether you want to be a lawyer, teacher or automobile technician, it gives you the opportunity to understand the wide variety of careers and see how classroom lessons can be applied in the workplace. School-to-work is about seeing academics in a different way, in a context that interests students. Learning theories show that [contextual learning] is one way most of us learn better."

Officials in Missouri will have to stress those benefits if they hope to nurture more programs beyond the state's three existing pilot sites. "[School-to-work] is raising a lot of concerns across our state that the government is getting into the decision-making process of what our children's future will be. The concerns are coming primarily from parents and teachers who see it as taking away time from [academic courses], particularly [with] job shadowing where kids take field trips to businesses," says Donna Hearne, a radio talk show host and head of an education research organization in St. Louis called Constitutional Coalition.

Hearne could not estimate what percentage of Missourians oppose the initiative, but the results of a 1996 survey contrast sharply with her assessment. Ninety-one percent of people in the state think their schools should place "much greater emphasis on teaching knowledge and skills relevant to the job market, like computers, math and science," concludes a survey of nearly 1,400 residents conducted by Public Agenda, a nonpartisan research and education organization.

As for the importance of local autonomy, Missouri recognizes that American education always has been and will continue to be shaped at the local level. Moreover, state officials stress that participation in any program, whether it is school-to-work or anything else, is strictly voluntary and dependent upon parent approval, says Russell McCampbell, the state assistant commissioner of vocational and adult education.

Fifteen regional partnerships comprising education, government, business and parent representatives support the Missouri system, which is still in its planning stage. To educate parents about school-to-work, the state may set up a clearinghouse to handle questions and requests for information, ask local speakers to hold town meetings and give printed material to local partnerships for distribution to parents. But it's up to local officials to mail anything home to parents, says Fred Linhardt, the state director of vocational planning and evaluation.

That may present a hurdle to efforts at garnering widespread support for the reform because parents like Mathey, gathering information on their own, feel school officials have not really made an attempt to share information or explain their goals. "I'm very confused about this whole thing and I'm just looking for answers. I'm waiting for a forum where parents can get answers because there are a lot of changes in our schools," she says. After repeated attempts to get some answers, Mathey says her group finally secured a meeting with a local school board member.

## The specter of Karl Marx

In Fairfax County, a Washington, D.C., suburb in Northern Virginia, parents have written to local newspapers accusing the school district of debasing its reputation for academic excellence. In 1995 the school system, noting that fewer than six of 10 four-year college students in Virginia eventually graduate, proposed to upgrade its vocational-technical program and teach academics in an occupational context.

After analyzing the regional labor market, Fairfax County created four career clusters: communications and the arts; engineering, industrial and scientific technology; health, human and public services; and business and marketing. A student interested in electronics or environmental planning would select electives within the engineering, industrial and scientific technology cluster in addition to taking core academic classes like English and U.S. history.

Teresa Fleming, director of professional-technical studies for Fairfax County, says the district does not require any student to take a professional-technical course or choose a career pathway. But Mary Breed thinks an integrated curriculum leaves little room for much else. "School-to-work should not be required for all students. Forcing children into school-to-work is simply not American. We should have free choice," says Breed.

The school district has a small number of critics within its own ranks as well. John Shepard, a member of the Fairfax County professional-technical advisory committee, wrote a hyperbolic letter to the *The Washington Times*, warning readers that the professional-technical studies component "is modeled after Stalinist Russia's polytechnic programs (which were even, in part, copied by Hitler's Nazis)."

*The Washington Post* columnist Steve Twomey took note of all the fury being sounded in the letters pages of local newspapers. "Boy, do I feel stupid. An entire suburban community has gone commie, and I missed it," he wrote in a September 1996 column. "The Evil Empire isn't dead. It has secretly collectivized our largest local school system."

On a more serious note, Fleming thinks the criticism is misguided and inevitable whenever change occurs. In contrast to the harsh comments about a communist takeover, she has heard many parents express relief that their children can get advice on career choices. "Let's face it: college is very expensive these days. And I, as a parent, certainly don't want to have my child take years to experiment and see what she wants to do," Fleming says. "[Professional-technical studies go] against the old mindset that students planning to go to work don't have to have the same academic background [as those planning to go to college]. That was fine when we were training kids in the industrial age for assembly line jobs. Now students really need to think creatively and process information in order to succeed." To shed light on integrated studies, the school system has planned a PTA tour of a high school technical program.

Parents like Breed seem to associate hands-on learning with traditional vocational programs. That supposition may be due in part to the common practice of putting state or local vocational directors in charge of school-to-careers implementation. The arrangement may lead some people to associate the reform with traditional vocational studies, but McNeil thinks the content of the reform matters more than which office coordinates it.

> "SOME PEOPLE BELIEVE IN A LOT OF CONSPIRACIES...WHAT SCHOOL PEOPLE HAVE TO DO IS REFUTE WHAT'S WRONG AND AND AGREE WITH WHAT'S RIGHT."
>
> —**Jack Jennings, director**
> **Center on National Education Policy**

## Refute misconceptions

Before introducing school-to-work reforms to the state in 1994, the Oklahoma Department of Vocational and Technical Education commissioned a random telephone survey of 500 citizens. Although there was a nearly unanimous vote in favor of career preparation in school, respondents said they would not support school-to-work if it were just another name for vocational education.

Following the respondents' suggestions on marketing strategies, officials have found it effective to hold small information forums and invite people into the classroom and to work sites. "[Critics are] always amazed when they recognize the high level of academics students are using on the job. When students are able to communicate [what they're learning], it does help alleviate concerns," says Patty Crabbe, the state school-to-work marketing coordinator.

The grass-roots approach received a publicity boost when 1996 Miss America Shawntel Smith, who hails from the land of Sooners, lent her name to the education movement by making it her platform. But even Oklahoma, home to some of the country's strongest vocational-technical programs, has its skeptics. The critics tend to be strong opponents of public education reforms in general and did not support past initiatives like Goals 2000, another federal law that encourages education reform, and one-stop career centers where students and adults can find out about local labor demands, says Crabbe. "They fail to see that school-to-work is...equally appropriate for children [who attend] home schools and private and parochial schools. [These schools] support it when they see they can tailor-make it for the individual child."

McNeil stresses the importance of refuting misguided criticism to avoid widespread misconceptions. "Communication has to take place at all levels. We have to be willing to listen to the concerns, not dismiss them out of hand. We have to talk to parents and have a clear message. We have to counter criticism that is not accurate. Show people what we're doing in the schools so they can see for themselves," she says. "I think it's important that parents understand this is not about picking up some program from Europe and imposing it here."

Educators in South Carolina vigorously market the reform by talking to parents and business representatives at local meetings and through television ads. Nevertheless, conservative hot spots like Greenville, home to a strong chapter of the Christian Coalition, still hear school-to-work denounced as socialist.

The backlash mostly has been fueled by small pockets of worried parents who don't understand the reform and conservatives who see it as government intrusion. Organized resistance often raises voices disproportionately louder than their numbers would suggest, says Jennings. He cautions against the danger of ignoring the discontented. "Some people believe in a lot of conspiracies. There's no way to convince them otherwise. You can talk until you're blue in the face..." Jennings says. "What school people have to do is refute what's wrong and agree with what's right. If you don't refute [those with misconceptions], they'll convince the next 5 percent, then the next 5 percent." ■

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# The Gatekeepers

## Will parents hear the school-to-careers message? The job is to convince them there's more than one way for their children to win.

**By Kenneth Gray**

*To many in the vocational education community, the school-to-careers concept makes perfect sense: Get students to think about how they'd like to make a living and guide them toward their goals. Teach them academic subjects in context. Give them options to pursue after high school: work, postsecondary education or both.*

*Since the early 1990s, the school-to-careers believers have made partners of many educators and policymakers. Now that school districts have begun to implement STC programs around the country, however, it is becoming clear that we may have failed to win over the most important constituent group: parents of school-age children.*

As the article on page 20 of this issue notes, a vocal opposition to STC programs is building. Many of the parents' comments reflect a misunderstanding of STC philosophies, which means reformers have not done an adequate job of explaining the issues. And it also shows we have not paid enough attention to the core problem: Parents who believe their children have only one way to win are not interested in education options.

The parental "one way" mentality is rooted in the belief that a four-year college degree will secure their child's place in the shrinking middle class. They are wary of any education plan that sounds at all different from the familiar college prep route.

While college always has been the hope of some parents for their children, the percentage of "all" parents who advise college increased by 20 percent between 1982 and 1992. In a national sample of high school sophomores, more than 80 percent said their mothers had recommended college.

When parents think of college, what they have in mind is a four-year college, or if not that, then a two-year general studies program designed to transfer into a four-year bachelor's degree program. The percentage of all SAT test takers who planned to pursue a two-year technical education reached an all-time low in 1995. In one Gulf Coast state, part of scholarship money for attendance at two-year technical colleges went unused.

Why is this happening? Largely because of myths that have grown up around the economy, higher education and the relationship between college degrees and good jobs. Unless the school-to-careers community can debunk these myths, both secondary and two-year postsecondary technical education could be in jeopardy. Nor are related high school programs such as integrated tech prep and school-to-careers likely to succeed widely unless parents can be convinced such programs open doors to high-skill, high-wage careers.

### Plan A: The Baccalaureate Game

If most parents already have their hearts set on Plan A for their children, how can educators get them to consider any other option? They can start with the facts. Communicating economic and education facts to parents doesn't mean issuing statistics with doomsday overtones. Instead educators should stress their desire to give parents the information they need to understand the big picture.

FACT: When today's youth are asked what they value, their responses are decidedly conservative. At the top of their list is "get a better job" and second is "job security," according to the 1994 Annual Survey of Entering College Freshmen. The majority think Plan A is the route to this goal. Ninety-five percent of high school sophomores surveyed for a recent Education Department study said they would go directly to college after high school, and 85 percent aspired to at least a four-year college degree.

***Why Parents Should Worry:*** *The career goals of most of the teens in the NCES study were unrealistic and probably uninformed. Half of the male students and 68 percent of the female high school students figured they'd have a job in the professional ranks by the time they turned 30. These high school students now preparing to graduate either are unaware that professional occupations make up only 20 percent of all jobs, or they are choosing to ignore the fact.*

While it is the American ideal to pursue dreams, attempting Plan A and failing to achieve a career objective (or even a degree, for that matter) is not a

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Kris Hackleman

fanciful side trip without consequences.

FACT: Most high school students do not graduate prepared for college-level academics. Even though most high school students now take college prep courses in high school, my research and National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) data suggest that, at best, only 30 percent of high school graduates have the aptitude and academic preparation necessary to handle college academic courses.

***Why Parents Should Worry:*** *Open admissions policies at all but about 200 of the nation's more than 3,000 four-year colleges have greatly broadened access to higher education—even for those who were just mediocre performers in high school. One negative result of this laudable practice is that colleges must offer remedial courses. While some call these courses a "second chance," very few remedial students emerge with a college degree. A recent Ohio study found that only 35 percent of students enrolled in college remedial courses graduated, and only 56 percent returned for their sophomore year.*

*Parents naively think that C's and B's earned in the college prep track are enough proof that their children will be prepared for college—especially if a college has accepted them. Wrong on both counts. Most parents have never heard of remedial courses in college and many are shocked to find their tuition dollars paying for them.*

FACT: At best, only about half of those who enroll in a four-year program have graduated six years later. Some estimate the figure to be as low as 30 percent. The American College Testing Service (ACT) reports that the college dropout rate hit an all-time high in 1996—27 percent of freshmen dropped out that year. Just 53 percent managed to graduate in five years.

Nor is the news good for parents who hope their children will transfer into four-year colleges from a community college. According to NCES, only 12 percent of these students are found at four-year colleges three years later.

In the 1995 *Condition of Education* report, Commissioner of Education Statistics Emerson J. Elliot noted that high rates of noncompletion may indicate "students do not have enough information about the actual skills in demand in the labor market" before making education decisions.

***Why Parents Should Worry:*** *Do they want to stake their children's future on 2:1 odds? If not, it's time to explore the options.*

FACT: A four-year college education is getting more and more expensive each year. The costs have outpaced the rate of inflation. Between 1980 and 1991, college costs rose 55 percent at private colleges and 32 percent at public colleges, while family income fell 2 percent during the same period. As a result, the typical college student now receives some sort of financial aid, usually in the form of loans. Loans comprised 55 percent of all financial aid in 1994-95—up from 20 percent in 1974.

***Why Parents Should Worry:*** *The depressing reality is that a student loan payment schedule probably is a likelihood for both winners and losers in Plan A.*

*And failing at Plan A is not without human costs, too. A college dropout faced with a significant student loan payment, or a college graduate who ends up working for minimum wage, is quite likely to be more than a little discouraged. And their frustration extends to parents, who may agonize over what went wrong.*

## Finding a job

FACT: In the 1970s, only one in five who graduated with a bachelor's degree failed to find a job in their field of study. Now the figure is one in three, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

***Why Parents Should Worry:*** *Remember, most young people hope to be working in the professions by the age of 30. They should know, then, that the odds are against them. Only one in two who graduate with a professional credential—such as for teaching, engineering, accounting or the biological sciences—will find commensurate employment. While our nation's colleges graduate 1.2 million students each year with professional degrees, the econo-*

## Fast-Growing Job Fields

*The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics forecasts healthy job growth through 2005, but some fields are more promising than others. The 1994 BLS report forecasts 1.4 million "technicians and related support" jobs will be added in the economy by 2005—a growth rate of 32.2 percent over 1992. Within this group are some of the nation's fastest-growing occupations—paralegals and health technicians. And many of the technician jobs do not require a four-year degree.*

*Here are examples of occupations that will provide the most new jobs in the decade ahead. In parentheses is the total projected number of jobs by 2005; at right the number of new jobs for the occupation.*

### Health Care

| | |
|---|---|
| Registered nurses (2.6 million) | +786,000 |
| Nursing aides, orderlies (2.4 million) | +594,000 |
| Home health aides (827,000) | +479,000 |
| Licensed practical nurses (920,000) | +261,000 |

### Computers and Business

| | |
|---|---|
| General office clerks (3.3 million) | +654,000 |
| Systems analysts (956,000) | +501,000 |
| General managers/executives (3.3 million) | +380,000 |
| Receptionists/information clerks (1.2 million) | +305,000 |
| Accountants and auditors (1.2 million) | +304,000 |
| Clerical supervisors (1.6 million) | +301,000 |
| Computer engineers and scientists (447,000) | +236,000 |

### Trades/Services

| | |
|---|---|
| Construction trades (4.3 million) | +786,000 |
| Vehicle mechanics & repairs (2.3 million) | +327,000 |
| Truck drivers (3 million) | +648,000 |
| Guards (1.2 million) | +408,000 |
| Maintenance workers (1.5 million) | +319,000 |
| Gardeners/groundskeepers (1.2 million) | +311,000 |
| Human services workers (445,000) | +256,000 |
| Machine Operators (4.3 million) | +241,000 |

*my generates only 600,000 jobs.*

FACT: Technical employment is the fastest-growing segment of the labor market.

***What Parents Should Know:*** *Most technical work will not require a four-year college degree. Only 25 percent of all technical work requires a four-year or graduate degree. The fastest-growing piece of the high-skill, high-wage technical workplace is occupations that will require an associate's degree.*

FACT: Although college graduates continue to earn more than high school graduates, a bachelor's degree is not a guarantor of a high income. The economic return from college is a complex issue. Education accounts for only some of the variation in individual earnings. Supply and demand are the key factors.

***What Parents Should Know:*** *Many baseball players seem to earn at least a million dollars a year. So why don't all parents encourage their children to become baseball players? Because they know not everyone is born with the kind of talent it takes to be a professional ballplayer, and there are few of these choice jobs available. It's not such a stretch to apply that analogy to Plan A: Only a third of all students graduate from high school prepared to succeed in college, and there are not enough jobs to satisfy the professional goals of all college graduates.*

Sadly, college graduates who lacked a career focus in school often find themselves working in low-skill, low-wage jobs while they search in vain for an opening in the field for which they studied. At the same time, graduates of two-year college programs in high-demand occupations—such as certified welders, dental hygienists, chefs and machine technicians—usually find high-paying jobs quickly.

The challenge is to get parents—and students, for that matter—to understand that labor market advantage for high-skill, high-wage employment comes not from education for the sake of a degree but education that is focused on a career goal. If the goal is a place in the middle-class, postsecondary plans should focus on obtaining real skills. Parents should be reminded of the old-fashioned advice that the key to success is to select an occupation in which one has aptitude and interest, then focus on preparing to make oneself marketable.

## Plan B: Other ways to win

For the small percentage of students who thrive in the traditional college prep atmosphere, Plan A may be worth the risk. For others, especially those from the academic middle or lower, the odds of success are long.

In the 1960s and '70s, young couples were told that their house would be their biggest expense. Today, for many, it will be their children's higher education. No one makes these kinds of investments without considering alternatives. No one willingly sends their children off to likely failure at a cost of thousands of dollars.

There are, of course, many reasons parents want their children to go to college that have nothing to do with careers and future earnings. Among them is a belief that a child's acceptance into a four-year college, particularly if it is a prestigious college, has become the most visible sign of parental effectiveness in the teenage years.

But if Plan A has proved to be a winner for only 25 percent of the student population, it makes sense to have another plan. And I don't mean alternatives that seem to be afterthoughts or that narrow a student's options. Here's where it's important for parents to know that school-to-careers programs can guide their children into challenging, well-paying occupations without closing any avenues.

FACT: School-to-careers programs do not preclude college.

***What Parents Should Know:*** *Adopting a school-to-careers mindset usually means introducing some meaningful forms of career guidance throughout the K-12 years; encouraging students into a broad career pathway, such as the health sciences, that encompasses their interests; delivering core academics in a career context where possible; and ensuring some type of work-based learning experience, from job shadowing to internships.*

*A student who performs well in the health careers pathway may elect to pursue a medical degree or, for example, a two-year nursing or lab technician degree. There are a range of possibilities within STC programs. The key is to make parents aware of career options and the education their children need for each. Most important, they need to understand that a child's decision to seek a two-year degree or a skilled job after high school should be supported.*

FACT: Sometimes college graduates with bachelor's and even graduate degrees enroll in two-year technical education programs. Called reverse transfers, they are so common now that many two-year colleges report the largest new source of students is the nearby university. These graduates have found their degrees in academic subjects aren't enough of a credential for non-teaching jobs. A community or technical college education can supplement a bachelor's degree with occupational skills and foster connections with area employers.

***What Parents Should Know:*** *Of six job groupings recognized by the Labor*

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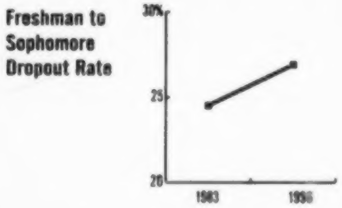
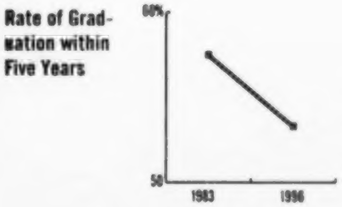
## The College Conundrum

***It used to be that a four-year college degree, regardless of the education focus, could almost guarantee entry into the professional job market. Reports on the income differential between those with college degrees and those without has led to a steady increase in college enrollment. Here's the dilemma: Now that most high school students choose the college route, the bachelor's degree is not the automatic door opener it once was, nor are all students sufficiently prepared to succeed in postsecondary education.***

### Poorly Prepared?

*A 1996 American College Testing survey of 2,564 schools noted a rise in the college dropout rate and a drop in the number of students who graduated within five years.*

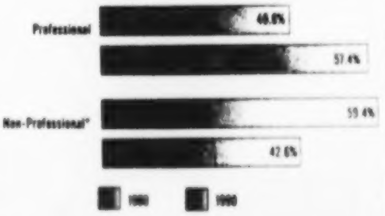




### Changed Marketplace

*Significantly more high school students are aiming for professional occupations today, although the number of professional jobs as a percentage of the economy remains essentially unchanged and other occupations offer better opportunities than in the past.*

**Occupational Expectations at Age 30 (All High School Sophomores)**



*Includes protective services, technical occupations, construction, clerical sales and service

**SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, "America's High School Sophomores, a Ten-Year Comparison"**

*Department—managerial/professional; craft, precision metal and specialized repair; technical suppport; service; operative/laborer; and farming/fishing—professional occupations are at the top of the pay tier. But parents usually are surprised to find that the precision metal/craft grouping offers, on average, the next highest salaries. These technical occupations exist in virtually every industry and in every work environment. Examples include construction drafter, medical lab technician, manufacturing systems operator, computer repairperson and paralegal. These jobs share an essential characteristic: they pay well but require specific occupational skills. These are skills that can be learned in a combination of high school vocational-technical programs, two-year colleges and employer-sponsored apprenticeship programs.*

FACT: Technician jobs not only pay well, but they are more plentiful than professional ones, which comprise only 20 percent of all occupations. For example, technical colleges in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, say they receive hundreds of calls from area manufacturers willing to pay top dollar for qualified graduates. This refrain has been repeated throughout the country.

Opportunities for women and minorities are even better. Women hold less than 10 percent of the jobs in the second-highest-paying occupational group in the economy, and minority participation is equally low. As a result, many firms are conducting national and international searches for skilled workers in these occupations, particularly for women and minorities with the relevant prerequisite skills.

FACT: A two-year technical education is less expensive. Tuition and fees for a two-year associate's degree are at most half that of a four-year degree. And students who choose this route are able to enter their career field sooner.

Succeeding in Plan B requires sound secondary-level preparation in school-to-careers programs that give students an academic and technical foundation.

These are the tips I give parents who want to know how to advise their children on career goals:

- Focus on postsecondary success, not postsecondary admissions. There's a college out there that will enroll your child. The hard part is making it through a college-level academic program and graduating.
- If the goal is high-skill, high-wage employment, do not confuse education with skill. This type of employment is highly competitive. Individuals who have the prerequisite occupational skills, not just a bachelor's degree, will have the advantage.
- Get serious about career exploration. Do not be fooled by the moldy advice that college is the best place to start thinking about careers. First, it's an expensive testing ground. Second, students who go to college without adequate occupational focus are less likely to graduate and even less likely to end up with commensurate employment if they do graduate.
- Make sure your children get a high school education that prepares them for a clear transition upon graduation. Simply taking courses is not a program of study. Good program examples are vocational-technical education, integrated tech prep and school-to-career activities. Make sure your child takes math and science during senior year so he or she doesn't wind up in remedial education at college.
- Have a Plan B, and be open-minded about when Plan B should become Plan A.

Many educators feel uncomfortable telling teens the odds associated with Plan A because they don't want to discourage them from pursuing a particular pathway. Faced with this dilemma, many educators at both the secondary and postsecondary levels have opted for the neutral or "benign neglect" approach, encouraging everyone to try Plan A and then letting higher education/labor market Darwinism sort out the winners and losers. In this approach, losers outnumber winners and the process is costly, both in human and financial terms.

Ultimately parents must decide what is best for their child, and they deserve to know the facts. Some may blame the messenger and many will not like the news, but in the end most will welcome the truth. ◆

**Kenneth Gray is a professor in the College of Education at Pennsylvania State University. With Edwin L. Herr, he recently co-authored *Other Ways to Win*, a book about "creating alternatives for high school graduates." It is available through the American Vocational Association.**

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MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
NO EFFECT ON LABOR MARKET
VOC ED FACT TEAM
VOC ED FACT TEAM
VOC ED FACT TEAM

# Debunking The Myths

## Research Offers Ammunition to Fight Misperceptions of Voc Ed

by Jim Stone

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If the quest for a positive public image can be considered a battle, then vocational education is on the defensive.

Why? Years of negative comments about vocational programs have created an undercurrent that limits their potential to serve students. Like old wives' tales, the negative comments gradually have become accepted as fact by many, without regard to the truth.

Some examples: Vocational education is only for those who can't handle rigorous academic coursework. Vocational programs aren't tied to the realities of the labor market. High school is the end of the educational road for vocational students.

Research shows that all those beliefs are bunk.

Statistics that emerge from the many studies conducted over the past decade show patterns of outcomes that demonstrate the value of vocational programs. Armed with these data, vocational educators can begin to face down their adversary—a public image based on myths and misconceptions about vocational programs.

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## The myths

### Myth 1: Only dummies take vocational courses.

**Facts:** It's estimated that more than 97 percent of all high school students take some vocational classes. Eighty percent of all high school students take at least one occupationally specific vocational course and 12 percent of "academic" students actually take more vocational courses than students who are considered vocational.

Students who concentrate on a particular vocational program consider their education to be more valuable. They consistently report higher satisfaction with their high school curriculum than do either college-prep or general curriculum graduates.

### Myth 2: Vocational education prevents students from continuing their education.

**Facts:** To the contrary, 61 percent of vocational students enter some form of postsecondary education and about half enter four-year colleges.

Although vocational education graduates are less likely to complete a four-year college degree when compared with other students, they are more likely to complete other postsecondary programs such as apprenticeships or formal, employer-sponsored training.

Some studies have found specific program effects. For example, male marketing education graduates are more likely to be involved in employer-sponsored training than any other group.

### Myth 3: Vocational education does not help students achieve academic competence.

**Facts:** A recent study found that college-bound students who took applied math were just as proficient in math as students who finished second-year algebra.

Other students who took 2.5 or more credits in business scored higher on vocabulary, reading and math tests than their counterparts with fewer than 2.5 business credits.

### Myth 4: Vocational education doesn't make any difference in the labor market.

**Facts:** Students who took four or more vocational courses during high school were 23 percent more likely to be employed in the 18 months following graduation than those who took one or no courses. They also earned 47 percent more in the first year after graduation than the group who took one or fewer vocational courses.

## Give 'Em the Facts

Repetition is a good way to influence people in a positive way. Here are a few gems that can never be stressed too much:

- Tell parents that vocational education is a pre-college program for many high-tech careers, teaches math, language and science in a meaningful context and provides students with wage-earning potential to support themselves in college.
- Point out to business people that employers who have hired voc ed graduates prefer them over non-voc ed graduates, that they have more training and thus are 6.5% more productive and that they require less informal on-the-job training.

Missouri follow-up studies determined that the state's vocational graduates earn 15 to 20 percent more than their non-vocational counterparts after five years in the labor market.

In a study based on federal tax returns, Ohio University researchers found that vocational graduates earned more four years after high school than high school graduates who did not participate in vocational education. They also found that vocational graduates were less likely to be unemployed than others of the same age, years of schooling and region of residence who were not vocational students in high school.

Employers also appear to value cooperative vocational education. They give consistently higher ratings to co-op students than to other new employees and prefer recent high school graduates who have had related vocational education coursework over those with none.

Eighteen of the 20 largest growth occupations, such as home health aide, paralegal, systems analyst, physical therapist and medical secretary, do not require a four-year college degree but do require some vocational education.

There also is evidence that participation in vocational education has an early and positive effect on moving students quickly into positions of management. This effect seems to diminish after about five years.

### Myth 5: Their jobs make them economically rich and psychologically poor.

This was the concluding statement from *When Teenagers Work: The Psychological and Social Costs of Adolescent Employment*, a popular book published in 1986 about the effects of employment on adolescents.

**Facts:** Research does not support this conclusion, at least for vocational students.

One statewide study found that five years after graduation, vocational graduates who had worked part-time during high school enjoyed a 7 to 14 percent advantage in earnings. Another study found that vocational students with high school work experience spent less time unemployed than did those who reported not working in high school.

### Myth 6: Adolescent employment creates poor attitudes toward work and working.

**Facts:** Students in school-supervised work experience programs exhibit positive and traditional work attitudes.

### Myth 7: Vocational education is a poor investment.

**Facts:** A study conducted in the mid-1980s shows that one dollar invested in vocational education saves $12.49 in future social costs, such as welfare. The study concluded only 4 percent of vocational graduates who didn't continue their education were unemployed, when the average unemployment rate for this age group at that time was 17 percent.

## Other benefits

Beyond the myths, there are questions about the value of participation in vocational education.

Some people wonder whether vocational education contributes to an understanding of the world of work.

When compared with other adolescents who work, cooperative education students feel more of a connection between work and school. Students in co-op programs report their jobs taught them problem-solving skills, responsibility and priority setting. They also report greater use of basic academic skills on the job.

There is a strong link between vocational education programs and the ca-

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reer development of students. The more vocational classes students choose in high school, the more likely they are to express an interest in a related career after high school.

Vocational education also keeps potential dropouts in school. Studies show that completion of one vocational course each year during four years of high school raises the graduation rate of at-risk youth by six percentage points. This translates ultimately to a 2 percent increase in earnings for these students.

The poor image of vocational education is not consistent with the evidence from years of research. The reality is that vocational education is a meaningful strategy to achieve an important goal of secondary education: to prepare students for the world of work.

**About the author**

**James R. Stone III** is a project director for the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, a NAVE consultant on School-to-Work Transition and an associate professor in the Department of Vocational & Technical Education at the University of Minnesota.

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AMERICAN VOCATIONAL ASSOCIATION

# PROMOTION GUIDE

## Your Guide to Promoting School-to-Careers and Vocational-Technical Education

# IDEAS for

Recruiting Students

Convincing Parents

Enlisting Other Educators

Getting Media Coverage

# Introduction

You know what wonderful opportunities School-to-Careers education offers your students. Launch a marketing campaign to convince your entire community to support the positive changes taking place in your schools.

People can't support School-to-Careers until they are aware of it, understand it and believe in it. That's what your marketing campaign must do.

Some simple keys to successful marketing are:

- start where your audience is – find out what they want
- recognize that their opinions, no matter how invalid, represent the truth for them at the moment
- position your "product" to meet their needs.

School-to-Careers can be marketed successfully because it truly offers benefits for everyone.

As educators, the business community and parents are becoming more aware that students need a different kind of preparation to compete in the global economy, it's the perfect time to showcase what your schools are doing.

The purpose of this guide is to help you plan and carry out a year-round celebration of School-to-Careers. The chapters which follow include ideas from a broad cross-section of schools. The practitioners who shared them have had dramatic success with these activities, and you will, too!

### *AVA Is Ready to Help You!*

Consult the AVA Professional Resources Catalog and Special Promotional Events catalog for information brochures and great logo line giveaway items to make your promotions memorable!

# Contents

**Chapter 1**

***Defining Your Audiences and Messages*** .......... **55**
Two Special Events . . . Year Promotional Calendar

**Chapter 2**

***Planning Makes Perfect*** .......... **60**
Put Together a Team . . . Goals . . . *Rules of Thumb*

**Chapter 3**

***Ideas That Work*** .......... **65**
Open House or School Tour . . . Career/College Fair . . . Contests/Appreciation/Recognition . . . Workshops and Meetings . . . Publications and Surveys

**Chapter 4**

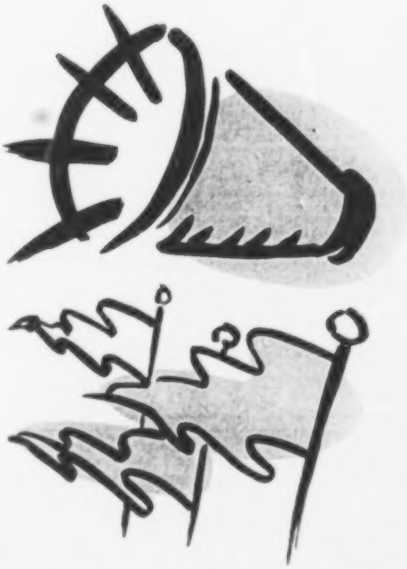
***Mall Shows*** .......... **74**
Planning . . . Mall Management . . . *Ideas for Exhibits* . . . Volunteers . . . On-site Management

**Chapter 5**

***Media Campaign*** .......... **80**
Advertising . . . Publicity . . . *Media Tips . . . Ideas for Future Stories . . . Creating Successful PSA's . . . Publicity Packets*

## Chapter 1

# Defining Your Audiences and Messages



**School-to-Careers is such an exciting adventure**, a road with many branches that offer wonderful opportunities for every student – those who plan to work full-time after high school, those whose career choices call for two years of postsecondary education and those whose goal is a four-year or postgraduate degree.

Whether you and your students are just starting down this road to success or are well along the pathway, it's important for you to "bring others along" by making sure they're aware of what School-to-Careers can do for young people and the business community. Your enthusiasm may urge a "shout-it-from-the rooftops" approach, but marketing (and that's what you'll be doing) calls for techniques that are vastly more sophisticated.

***First of all, you need to determine whom you need to reach with your message!*** Successful marketing is never based on a "one-message-fits-all" campaign. There are many audiences you'll want to inform about School-to-Careers, but the major ones can be clustered under five broad umbrellas: students, parents, employers, educators and policymakers. And the message that will get the most attention from each group is the one that answers the question,

***"What's in it for me?"***

As tempting as it is to share your enthusiasm immediately, much of your effort and money will be wasted unless you take the time to find out what your target audiences "know" (which may not match the facts at all!) and what they want. It's hard to tell people what a new product or concept offers them unless you can match it with their hopes and dreams. That's why marketing has to begin with research.

Focus groups, in-person or phone interviews and mail-back surveys are some of the methods you can use to collect information. Your data will, of course, vary from that in other communities, but it's possible to generalize, based on what school districts in many parts of the country have learned from their market research. Here are some findings from educators who have conducted market research about each of your **primary audiences.**

## Students

Most teenagers don't make the connection (either literally or figuratively) between their high school years and a future career. (A major reason why it's so important to begin career awareness and exploration activities in the primary grades!) Their primary interests are being with their friends and having fun. And many young people still associate technical training with blue-collar jobs.

### Messages that appeal to students

- School-to-Careers helps you begin to prepare for a great career while you're still in high school.
- Classes are taught with an "applied" approach that challenges you to use your hands, as well as your head. The practical applications make subject matter easier to understand and more interesting.

- School-to-Careers is a college-bound system. When you finish high school, you'll have a good foundation for beginning work on an associate's degree and quite possibly several hours of free college credit. And if your career plan calls for a four-year university degree, you'll be prepared for that, too.

## Parents:

They want what's best for their children - a good education, a secure, satisfying career and, in general, a better life than they've had. The problem in marketing School-to-Careers to parents (and they will undoubtedly be your most difficult audience) is that they "know" the key to success is a four-year college degree. It's tough to convince them, after years of hearing otherwise, that unless their son or daughter is prepared for the age of technology they're likely to become part of the first generation in America to face a harder life than their parents.

### *Messages that appeal to parents*

- School-to-Careers is for all students, no matter what their career goals. The curriculum is more practical, but just as rigorous as the traditional college-prep curriculum. Students do better because they see the relevance of what they're learning to the career they'll want in the future.
- School-to-Careers is a college-bound program. Every student is encouraged to complete at least a two-year college degree in one of the technical fields that will provide the best jobs in the future. Those whose careers call for four-year degrees will be on track, too.
- School-to-Careers is all about options and choices, but there's nothing random about it. Your student will have a career/education plan that you have helped to design. Young people who know where they're going and what they need to do to get there are much more likely to achieve their goals and become successful, independent adults.

## Employers:

Business and industry leaders were among the first to support School-to-Careers because they recognized that it will provide what they need – a better-trained workforce that performs more efficiently and needs less on-the-job training. It may be difficult to convince these people that educators are sincere in wanting them to be full partners in planning and implementing School-to-Careers systems, but you can be sure they are strong believers in its potential and can be its most effective advocates to others in the community.

### *Messages that appeal to employers*

- School-to-Careers is for all students. It is widely supported. It will be around for a long time. Your involvement with curriculum planning and implementation and your first-hand interaction with educators and students will ensure that the young people you employ are better prepared to meet the demands of the workplace.
- They'll also understand that learning doesn't end with a diploma. Giving teachers and counselors the opportunity to spend time in your business will acquaint them with the skills the workplace requires and help them prepare students to be more effective employees.

## Educators:

It will not be easy to convince some educators that School-to-Careers offers wonderful opportunities and choices to all students, that its curriculum is as stringent as the traditional college-prep track, that it is, in fact, a college-bound program. Veteran teachers have seen so many fads come and go. Until they realize what promise School-to-Careers holds for changing the entire approach to career preparation, many will dismiss it as just the latest wonder cure for what ails education. And, finally, there will be tremendous difficulty in overcoming the fact that many educators, even more than parents, believe that anything less than a four-year degree is second best.

What will eventually bring these doubters into the fold is that, again like parents, they want what's best for kids. When they understand School-to-Careers (and see the results!), they, too, will be supporters.

### *Messages that appeal to educators*

- School-to-Careers is for all students, including those who expect to complete a four-year university degree. It is a college-bound program.
- The curriculum is just as rigorous as the traditional college-prep track, but because it features applied academics and worksite experience, students see its relevance to "real life." Attendance improves, grades go up and behavior problems decrease. Teaching is easier and more exciting. School is a happier place for everyone!
- Employers who will be hiring your graduates in the 21st century are helping to design your community's School-to-Careers system and put it into action. There will be opportunities for you to spend time in the workplace to see how your subject matter is applied there.

## Policymakers:

Like almost everyone else, they have grown up believing that a four-year degree is the key to the American dream. They have also funded countless programs guaranteed to solve the problems of education and seen them all replaced by other programs with guarantees just as glowing. They need to be convinced that School-to-Careers is different, that it is here to stay and that it is strongly supported by both educators and the business community.

### *Messages that appeal to policymakers*

- School-to-Careers is good for students, business and the economy. It will attract more business and industry to your community/state.
- Better-prepared workers earn more, pay more taxes and lower the need for expensive social services such as welfare and prisons.
- Policymakers who support School-to-Careers will gain the votes of educators who know it's the best way to prepare students for the future, of parents who want their children to become successful, independent adults, and of employers who want a workforce prepared for the 21st century.

## Deliver your Messages at These Special Events!

For more than 30 years, the second full week in February has been celebrated as **Vocational Education Week**, when technical education programs in every state "strut their stuff." Because so many schools are staging special activities at the same time, the positive effect across the country is multiplied many-fold. It's long-established in the public mind, and it's a tradition you'll certainly want to continue.

Beginning in 1997, there's even more time to celebrate, as the entire month of March becomes **School-to-Careers Month**. This should be yet another highlight of your year-long marketing campaign, with events that keep you in the news on an almost daily basis.

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## Promotion Is Year-Round

***Special events during Vocational Education Week or School-to-Careers Month can create tremendous excitement about your programs*** and provide unusual opportunities for you to showcase them and your students. They get the attention of the public in a way that less showy activities cannot.

But, how many people do you think would buy Chevies, or Heinz catsup or Levi's jeans if they were reminded only once or twice a year what fine products these are? The public is notoriously fickle, and "out of sight, out of mind" is as true for educational programs as for any commercial item.

The wonderful advantages School-to-Careers offers to every student and the business community need to be kept before the public not just on special occasions, but every day. The more positive references people hear, the better your image and the greater your public support. Chapter 3 is full of ideas for activities that can be implemented throughout the year. And the calendar on the opposite page includes suggestions that will help you plan your marketing schedule for the next year.

Chapter 3 is full of ideas for activities appropriate for these special celebrations, as well as for celebrations at other times in the year. And Chapter 4 will tell you everything you need to know to stage a spectacular mall show, the sort of event that attracts huge crowds and keeps them talking long after the show is over. This is the kind of activity you'll want to cap School-to-Careers Month.

## A Year's Worth of Promotional Events

### *September*

Shine the spotlight on your programs at Back-to-School Night. Use some of the ideas from the section on open houses in Chapter 3 to make visits to your classrooms and labs special. Have students on hand to show guests around. Give visitors something to take home with them.

### *October*

It's fall festival season. Arrange for your programs to have booths displaying student projects and both staff and students available to talk with passers-by about the great opportunities School-to-Careers offers. Have plenty of colorful handouts and small items with a contact name and phone number for people to take home.

### *November*

This is the month for American Education Week. Make sure that School-to-Careers is front and center as an integral part of the educational program for all students. Arrange a newspaper, radio or TV interview with an employer who's a strong supporter of School-to-Careers and/or with an especially successful student or graduate.

### *December*

Holidays fairs of all kinds abound in December, and they afford a fine opportunity to do something unusual and attention-grabbing. For example, see the item in Chapter 3 about raffling a dollhouse, built and furnished by students, just in time for a wonderful holiday surprise for some little girl - and great publicity for your programs.

### *January*

The after-the-holidays blahs cause people to welcome something interesting and new. Use a winter festival or Legislative Day for a splash of publicity about School-to-Careers. It's an ideal time to emphasize its advantages and opportunities, since in many districts students sign up for next fall's classes in January.

### *February*

The second week in this month is Vocational Education Week. Mark it with recruitment events or second semester open houses.

### *March*

This is School-to-Careers Month, a great time for a career fair or mall show. There are lots of suggestions for planning and implementing these activities in Chapters 3 and 4.

### *April*

Arrange to be part of the spring festivals or other celebrations staged by organizations in your community. Or hold your own really spectacular event, like the Taste of Plano, described in Chapter 3.

### *May*

As school winds to a close, it time to celebrate your successes with recognition events for students, teachers and employers. Be sure to notify the media in advance so the community will be aware of all the fine things you've accomplished during the year.

# *Planning Makes Perfect*

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Now that you've considered why it's necessary to market School-to-Careers, identified your major audiences and studied the messages that will appeal to each of them, it's time to start developing a year-round marketing campaign.

## Put Together a Team

Start planning early for the coming school year by assembling a team in the spring to develop a month-by-month activity calendar that runs from September to May. Finding the right combination of people to work together is critical to the success of your activity. Use this checklist for planning:

☐ ***Name a chairperson.***
This job requires a myriad of diplomatic and organizational skills – the ability to prepare an agenda, keep track of details, motivate others, coordinate activities and see that everything gets done on time – all the while inspiring everyone else to maintain a positive, cooperative frame of mind when things get hectic. The chair will need to interface with many different groups and represent the school in the community. Ideally, he/she should have a flexible schedule – or, better yet, be relieved of some regular duties during the school year.

☐ ***Get the support of top administrators.***
You can't carry out a successful program without the visible support of top management. Involve them from the beginning in what you want to do and how it will benefit your school. Let them know well in advance the dates on which you would like them to speak at events or serve as hosts. Present a written list and get confirmation on each date. Make sure there are plenty of opportunities for administrators to talk enthusiastically to staff about the planned activities. (People have a way of getting behind things they know are important to the boss!)

☐ ***Involve all the school family.***
To function effectively, your planning team must include representatives from every group of school employees. Remember the Boston Tea Party? No one likes to be told what to do without having a say in the planning. Involvement creates a sense of ownership. Look for "go-getters" who are good communicators and are respected by their peers. Remind them often that a successful marketing campaign will benefit them and their department. (Educators, like everyone else, respond to a "what's-in-it-for-me" message!)

☐ ***Involve students.***
Make them a part of planning and preparation by giving them jobs related to their area of study. Marketing students can benefit from media contacts and writing press releases. Data processing classes can organize mailing lists and produce labels. And teenagers can provide excellent insight on what's likely to appeal to their peers.

☐ ***Make business and industry representatives full partners in the planning process.***
They should already be partners in the classroom and labs, and their ideas for year-round marketing activities can be invaluable. Many of them will have experience with trade shows or other special events. Some will have graphic designers, artists, writers and PR people who can provide advice or services. Make sure you let the business/industry reps know you value their suggestions, too, not just the material things they can provide.

☐ ***Look for other community resources.***
This is a fine time to recruit new business partners. Find meaningful ways to make community officials and other professionals a part of things. Every community has leaders who can provide advice and counsel. Some may even be willing to serve on your planning team. They can provide valuable professional assistance - and their involvement may well mean your event will get more attention from others in the community.

☐ ***Don't make your planning team too large to function effectively.***
Select enough people to represent a cross-section of your school and the business/industrial community and to provide the resources you need, but avoid having so many the process bogs down. (With a huge committee, there's always the temptation to assume that someone else will get things done.) A well chosen core group of 12-15 is probably enough to direct the year's activities without being unwieldy. Recruit worker/doers, rather than sitter/talkers.

☐ ***Share responsibility.***
Make each member of the planning team chair of a sub-committee with specific responsibility for some aspect of an event. Chairs can recruit their own sub-committee members.

☐ ***Keep things moving.***
Hold frequent brief meetings to make decisions, delegate responsibilities, check on progress and keep people informed. Allow time for discussion, but keep it on track. In good meetings, decisions are reached and recorded and people leave knowing what they're responsible for. As an event draws near, there's need for more action and less talk, but it's still important to meet to make sure everything is progressing as planned.

☐ ***Keep people informed.***
After your first meeting, circulate a contact list with names, addresses and phone numbers of team members. Update as needed. Issue a brief memo immediately after each planning session. Summarize all the highlights, noting especially who is to do what before you meet again. Everyone in the school needs to be informed about the progress of plans with newsletters and memos.

☐ ***Let the pros give you a hand.***
You don't have to reinvent the wheel. The AVA Promotional Guide is full of materials to facilitate your marketing plan and provide a strong professional image for your events. Reviewing this guide during brainstorming sessions will help the flow of creative ideas. The public information officer at your state department of education can also be a good resource, providing reference books on marketing, sample materials, up-to-date media contact lists and the names of people in your state who have staged events like the ones you're planning.

## Set Your Goals

Once you have your planning team in place, its first and most important task is to agree on what you hope to accomplish. It is impossible to achieve anything haphazardly. As one seasoned practitioner says, "Spontaneity requires a little luck and a lot of preparation!" Stay focused. Make sure everyone knows what you're going to do and why, so that a united front is presented to the community.

The goals you select should relate directly to the specific audiences you want to reach. Your key audiences are students, parents, employers, other community leaders, including policymakers and other educators. You may want to reach all of them, but you will need to develop a priority ranking for your efforts.

Once you've determined your top goals and primary audiences, you're ready to begin to plan strategies and activities to achieve your goals. What methods of advertising are most likely to reach them? What messages will make them want to participate? What will impress them most when they come to your events or read your materials?

## Consider Your Resources

Before you start brainstorming ideas to reach your goals, consider the resources you have available: time, personnel and money. List all the things you'd like to do, then eliminate until the "want to's" balance with the "can do's." If you have to cut your list too drastically, look for sources of help. Don't be too proud to ask for donations. (You have a good cause!) See if businesses will sponsor ads or other pieces. Keep in mind that AVA offers professionally designed and written materials at a reasonable cost. And don't feel too bad if you can't do everything at once. Remember, a few well-run activities will have greater impact than a year's worth of poorly planned and implemented events.

## Decide on Priorities

Once you have set your goals for the year and determined how much time and money you can invest, you need to establish priorities. Even though you may carry out many activities, some are certain to deserve more effort and funding than others. Start by asking yourself the question, "Of all the things we hope to accomplish, which are the most important?" If your number one goal is to increase enrollment in School-to-Careers programs, then a breakfast for business/industry leaders is obviously not the event to focus on. (Finding the right activity is always more difficult than weeding out the ones that won't work.)

### Rules of Thumb

1. Everything takes more time than you think it will.
2. The earlier your start, the better.
3. Estimate how much time you think a task should take. It will take longer than this.

## Start Small

Another important bit of advice: Start small and build on your successes. If your school has little or no experience with the kinds of activities suggested in this kit, pick just one of them and do it well. It will give you a gauge of how much you're able to accomplish and confidence that you can be successful.

## Establish a Timetable

Managing a year-long marketing campaign is a big undertaking. Make everyone's job easier by anticipating all the things your team will need to do and – just as important – when they need to be done. Follow this checklist in developing a timetable and you'll get everything done with a minimum of last-minute panic.

☐ ***Allow plenty of time to:*** pick the very best people to help; meet often with the planning team; make a team member personally responsible for seeing that each task is completed on schedule; find the best location for each activity; recruit outstanding speakers, if you'll have events that require them; write, print and distribute materials; order promotional materials from AVA; and advertise your events and build an audience.

☐ ***A planning calendar is a must.*** Develop a separate one for the entire year and for each event. The sample which follows will help you.

☐ ***If someone comes up with a great idea after plans are set, don't say no without considering it.*** You might pass up the best thing yet. Evaluate it and decide if there's still time to include it and do it well.

☐ ***Plan for the inevitable last-minute panic.*** Set a deadline of three working days before each event for everything to be ready. This will give you time to deal with unexpected crises.

☐ ***Be realistic about what you can accomplish.*** Recognize that everyone on the team (not to mention others in the school) may not be quite as dedicated as you are and that they still have all their usual responsibilities. Again, allow more time for every task than you think it should take.

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# SAMPLE PLANNING CALENDAR
# for a Luncheon, Dinner or Other Event

### *Three Months Before the Event:*

- ***Appoint a sub-committee,*** chaired by a member of the marketing team, and hold the first meeting. Set a goal for the event. Determine a budget. Discuss ideas for the luncheon or dinner program, including a speaker, awards, music or other entertainment. Establish responsibilities for obtaining speakers and entertainment, planning the menu, invitations and decorations. Study the AVA catalog for ideas and products.
- ***Reserve space for the event at an appropriate site.***

### *Two Months Before the Event:*

- ***Hold sub-committee meeting(s) as necessary.***
- ***Decide on the menu*** and arrange to have the meal prepared and served.
- ***Obtain final commitments*** from celebrities/speakers/ entertainment.
- ***Design invitations,*** programs and other materials and arrange for printing.
- ***Order materials from AVA.***

### *One Month Before the Event:*

- ***Hold sub-committee meeting(s) as necessary.***
- ***Select recipients for recognition at the event and arrange for plaques, certificates or other awards to be engraved or printed.***
- ***Prepare a news release*** about the event and other items (fact sheets on your school and programs, a photo and bio of speaker) for a media kit.
- ***Distribute media kits and news releases,*** along with notices for newspaper calendar page editors.
- ***Follow up the distribution of media kits*** with calls to print and electronic media about feature stories on your event.
- ***Address and mail invitations*** to special guests and appoint someone to be responsible for keeping track of responses.

### *Two Weeks Before the Event:*

- ***Hold sub-committee meeting(s)*** as necessary.
- ***Plan table and seating arrangements***, decorations and other details of room set-up.
- ***Contact major participants*** to make sure the event is on their calendars.

### *The Week Before the Event:*

- ***Check last-minute details.***
- ***Check them again.***

### *The Week After the Event:*

- ***Send thank-you notes*** to everyone who helped and to media that covered the event.
- ***Ask sub-committee members and others to evaluate*** the event and prepare a written report for reference next year. Be sure they include problems, as well as successes.
- ***Prepare a scrapbook*** containing the evaluations, samples of all the print materials used, press clippings, photos and recommendations for improving next year's event and file it for future reference.

## Helpful Reminders

- Allow plenty of time for planning. Activities that are hastily thrown together tell the public you didn't care enough to do a good job – so why should they be interested?
- Know exactly what you want to accomplish, and let everyone else know, too.
- Brainstorm to make a list of all the resources you have available through your school or business/industry partners: equipment for unusual, attention-grabbing displays; artists to design posters and printers to produce them; foods classes to plan menus; and PR pros to offer advice and provide an "in" with the media.
- Don't overstretch your resources. If you can't really afford a large-scale event, it's better to do a small one with class.
- Assume the worst will happen if you don't check every detail ahead of time. (And be prepared if it happens anyway!)
- Say thank you – sincerely and often.

## Chapter 3

# *Ideas That Work*

This chapter includes information about eight promotional activities that have proven to be winners all over the country.

## 1. Open House or School Tour

Open houses and school tours are wonderful ways to showcase your school, programs, faculty and students. **Your goals should include:**

- giving guests a first-hand look at what goes on
- creating a positive impression of the opportunities available
- inspiring young people to enroll
- encouraging employers to hire graduates

**Target Audience:** Students . . . Parents . . . Educators . . . Employers . . . Policymakers

### *Spread the Word*

Issue special invitations to individuals you particularly want to reach – local and state government officials, major employers or the media, for example. Advertise in student publications and, if you can afford it, obtain mailing labels for prospective students you are targeting and send personal invitations to them and their parents. (If a major goal is to increase enrollment, plan your open house/school tour just prior to the time that student schedules are to be set for the following fall.)

At least two weeks ahead of time, send a news release about your event and a photo of students actively involved in a project to print media. (Let each newspaper know that the photo they receive is different from those going to other papers.) If you can afford it, send camera-ready ads (prepared by your graphic arts students) to the newspapers. Send PSAs to radio and TV stations.

**Tip:** Schedule both day and evening hours for your event, so that it will be convenient for everyone to attend. Although there will obviously be more student activity during the day, arrange to have a number of students on hand in the evening, too. Visitors like to see what they are doing in the classroom, and outgoing, enthusiastic young people make delightful guides.

### *Prepare the Building*

Make sure your building looks its best. A clean, well-lit atmosphere, while it may not directly influence the quality of the programs offered, certainly creates a favorable impression with visitors. Display many examples of students' work, with cards identifying who did each piece, the program they are in and their career goal. Showcase awards and honors students have won – pictures of district, state and national contest winners, their winning entries and award ceremonies. Hang welcoming banners at each entrance and feature posters, designed by commercial art students, emphasizing that your graduates are preparing for high-demand careers.

If your school has a Hall of Fame for outstanding graduates, hang their pictures in a prominent place, with captions to show when they graduated and what they're doing now. And feature a quote from each, telling how their school experiences helped to prepare them for a successful career.

Station students at each entrance to welcome guests. Set up a hospitality room where visitors can sign in and receive name badges. Provide coffee and cookies. Have brochures about your school and each career

program available for them to pick up. Pass out cards that must be punched in each department (or a specific number of them) to make visitors eligible for drawing prizes. Print a short evaluation form on the back of these cards, so you'll have some feedback when you collect them.

School administrators should be in the hospitality room throughout the event to greet arriving guests and to answer any questions they may have as they turn in their drawing/evaluation cards. (It makes visitors feel valued to know that the superintendent or principal has taken time to talk with them.)

Have a well-drawn map of your school available for visitors, and have students with badges or printed ribbons identifying them as guides stationed throughout the building to help guests find the rooms they're looking for. Choose these young people carefully and provide an orientation session to ensure they are prepared to answer questions. Most visitors will be content to look around on their own, but have several students prepared to give guided tours. Make sure they can speak knowledgeably about every program.

## Prepare your People

Make sure everyone in the building understands the importance of treating guests with courtesy and impressing them with the good job being done by staff and students. A rude student or a grouchy custodian can quickly cancel the good impression made by others.

Each department should plan an interesting project to work on when visitors are present. It is good for guests to be actively involved. If groups are small, they may be able to produce an item to take home. (Or each department can have student-produced items to hand out.) Make sure every instructor and student is ready to explain how the things they're learning will be put to use in the workplace. Have members of your advisory committee (identified with special name badges or ribbons) on hand in each department to reinforce the fact that these young people are being well prepared for the jobs of the future. It's especially impressive to parents to see that employers support what your school is doing and are actively involved with your programs.

## If Your Event Is Keyed to Students . . .

Have your admissions counselors schedule pre-visit sessions to prepare students for what they will see, or provide materials for classroom teachers to do this. Invite only the number of students you can handle effectively in each visit, and have each of them select the career programs they are most interested in visiting. Ask that a teacher or counselor from the home school accompany each class of students. Arrange for transportation, if this is not provided by the home school. Ask that permission slips for the trip be signed by parents and returned to the home school.

Provide an individual schedule for each student, to be handed out before they leave their home school. Greet students in an introductory session, followed by a school tour and 30-minute visits to several career programs, matching students' requests as nearly as possible. Ask instructors to plan simple hands-on activities that will enable students to take home something they have made in each program visit. Assign a tech student to each one or two visitors to help with these activities and talk with them about the school.

Close with a question-and-answer session and refreshments. Hand out brochures and other information about your school, including a piece targeted to parents and a sheet that tells students how to enroll. Provide some little give-aways like pencils or key chains with a catchy slogan – and a plastic bag for them to carry everything in. Look in AVA catalogs for these items.

## After It's Over

Ask your staff and students to evaluate the event – what was good, what wasn't so good, what should be done differently next time. Go through the evaluation forms turned in by guests. Prepare a listing of all the comments, by category, and distribute them.

Using the cards visitors turned in, hold drawings for prizes donated by each department and deliver them. Have someone enter the names, addresses and phone numbers from these cards into the office computer as the beginning of a contact list of people interested in your school. It will come in handy for future mailings.

Send thank-you notes to guests who were specially invited – policymakers, employers, the media. If you got good media coverage before or after the event, be sure to thank the reporter and/or photographer, with a copy to the editor.

If your event was a tour for students, send individual thank-you notes to each of them (mailed to their homes if you can afford it; otherwise to their school) and to the teachers and counselors who accompanied them.

Schedule a meeting of the planning committee to discuss whether your event met its goals and what changes, if any, should be made for next year.

### *What Others Are Doing*

The advisory council in the Sumner (Washington) School District, in cooperation with elementary PTAs, holds an open house at the high school to give sixth graders information about the career paths available there. Students tour the building, including all the technical training programs, and receive handouts to take home to their parents.

The Careers Unlimited Program at Linn (Missouri) State Technical College gets a radio station to do a live remote broadcast from its open house and gives away plants from the horticulture department, plane rides from the aviation department, medallions from the machine tool department and oil changes from the automotive department.

The **Corpus Christi Independent School District** celebrates VIP Day, designed to involve community business leaders in vocational education instruction. During a two-hour class visitation, each visitor is teamed with a student, who teaches him/her a skill such as using CAD to design a house. They must produce a product to show to other guests during the VIP luncheon, which also gives them an opportunity to discuss their class experience and provide feedback.

### Remember These Marketing Concepts!

**The messages people accept and act upon** are the ones that are repeated over and over, and these messages should take many different forms. Some people remember best by reading, some by hearing, some by seeing for themselves. And almost all of us remember – and enjoy most – the things we learn by doing, with personal, hands-on involvement.

**An effective marketing plan** includes a variety of activities and publications designed to appeal to every learning style. One major event, no matter how glorious, can not take the place of a year-round marketing campaign. As noted in Chapter 2, your committee needs to plan activities for every month of the year, certainly including one or more showcase events during Vocational Education Week or School-to-Careers Month.

**Some activities will be most effectively targeted to a single audience.** For example, a carefully planned school tour with hands-on involvement and pre- and post-activities at their home school is a great way to interest students in your programs. (Encourage home-school teachers and counselors to accompany the students, and you can chalk up another audience influenced!)

**Promoted correctly, a mall show can encompass every facet of the community** (See Chapter 4). Special events like this, that give you the opportunity for person-to-person contact, are tremendously successful but may reach only limited numbers unless you stage a strong media campaign.

## 2. Career/College Fair

A career/college fair can attract high school and college students and adults. With an increasing emphasis on School-to-Careers transitions, this provides a great chance to stress results. **Your goals should include:**

- giving young people and their parents the opportunity to get information about many different careers and the education necessary to succeed in them
- helping people (especially parents) understand that a four-year college degree is not a requirement in many good careers
- making people aware that the path to success in most of the best careers of the future begins at your school

**Tip:** You can hold your career/college fair in your school gym, but attendance will undoubtedly be greater if you can secure space in a popular mall on a Friday night and Saturday. (It's important to have both day and evening hours.) A variation is a hiring or job fair held on your own campus to give your students and their parents an opportunity to talk with recruiters or personnel directors from major employers in the community. Prior to the actual event, you may want to provide assistance to students in preparing resumes and role-playing job interviews.

**Target Audiences:** Students . . . Parents . . . Employers

### *Advertise in school publications and in the local media*

Place posters created by your commercial art students in schools, stores, libraries, laundromats, barbershops, beauty salons, the YMCA and other places where people congregate. If your event will be held in a mall, ask if they will " piggy-back" your ad with their own print advertising and feature it on signage in the mall or on outside display boards.

### *Have employers and successful graduates on hand*

They can talk to students and parents about opportunities in the "real world." Including representatives of colleges or other postsecondary educational institutions whose career programs are articulated with yours will double the value of your fair and emphasize to parents and students that a four-year degree is no longer the key to success.

### *Hand out attractive brochures and fact sheets about your programs*

AVA has many informational publications that make excellent, low-cost handouts. You may also want to give away pencils, pens or other small, useful items. Also include with these handouts information about your school.

### *What Others Are Doing*

Concerned about the declining workforce in the area, the Regional Economic Development group offered substantial financial assistance to help the Columbia (Missouri) Public Schools expand its Career Fair to include every eighth grader in the county and to add an Employment Fair open to the public later that day and evening. More than 1,500 students and 1,000 adults attended. The Economic Development group put together profiles on every exhibitor, showing the number of people working in each job field and the career paths in those fields.

The W.R. Jamison Technical Center in Franklin County, Virginia, staged a two-day Technical Education Fair during school lunch periods. It featured a student band with a teacher as lead singer, hands-on skill demonstrations from each of the seven technical areas, displays by the co-curricular clubs and representation from two community colleges and two tech prep consortia. Business and industry reps and other community residents attended, along with students and staff. Students wrote spots for morning announcements, clubs provided faculty favors, marketing classes handled promotion, including posters, banners, radio spots, a slide show, announcements on local cable TV and notepads used as handouts. Buiness students designed the invitations, building trades students cleaned and painted the dividers between displays, technology students used CAD to produce signs and telecommunications classes videoed the event. Local businesses contributed sodas and door prizes.

The counseling staff at Indian Creek High School in Trafalgar, Indiana, organized the Johnson County Apprenticeship Fair to show students that apprenticeships are no longer the dark and dangerous world of Charles Dickens. Fourteen programs were featured in the program held in the school gym. Presentations emphasized that skilled trades can provide excellent career options.

North Laurel High School in London, Kentucky, organizes panels of business/industry leaders for each of its 14 career clusters on Career Day. It's not only a great way to get community people into the school, but also gives students an opportunity to get career information directly from local employers.

## 3. Contests/Appreciation/Recognition

Student contests and appreciation/recognition activities for students, staff members or others in the community are enjoyable occasions. **They can help you achieve such goals as:**

- raising the morale of those honored and providing an incentive for others to achieve
- creating opportunities for positive publicity
- enhancing the reputation of your school in the eyes of the public

**Target Audiences:** Students . . . Parents . . . Educators . . . Employers . . . Policymakers

### *Hold an essay contest on the topic of career preparation.*

If the winners are also effective speakers, see if a radio or public-access cable TV station will feature them on the air. If not, submit the winning entries to local newspapers with good photos of the authors.

### *Sponsor regional or statewide contests*

Select outstanding students in each School-to-Careers program area and announce the winners in March, with great fanfare. Arrange for them to meet local or state dignitaries and be interviewed by the media. Include photos and a short feature story about each winner in school and district publications or compile them in a booklet to be distributed to prospective students and business partners. Feature each winner on a flyer to be posted in the guidance office, library and cafeteria of his/her home school.

Show your appreciation to advisory committee members and other volunteers. What better time than School-to-Careers Month for a Teacher Appreciation Breakfast? A framed certificate hanging in their office or business will show customers they support your program. A small gift – key chain, note pad, pen or candy jar with a catchy logo – also keeps your program before the public.

### *What Others Are Doing*

The tech prep program in the Hillsborough County School District sponsors a poster contest for students in grades 7-12, with the winning design going on billboards around Tampa, other outstanding entries displayed in the school administration building and some duplicated to hang in secondary schools. Another contest invites students in grades 7-12 to design games, coloring pages and other materials to promote career awareness in elementary students.

Plan activities during February or March that recognize and reward students in your career programs, making them "special" in the eyes of their classmates. The Marshall County School District in Benton, Kentucky, hosts a get-together before a basketball game for ninth graders who have pre-enrolled in tech prep and provides free game tickets and refreshments for the students and their parents.

In St. Mary's County, Maryland, 60 businesses participate in a program that rewards tech prep students who have a high GPA, no discipline problems and few absences. The highly coveted "passports," good for free or discounted pizza, gasoline and skating rink and movie passes, are presented during an all-school assembly.

## 4. Career-Related Activities for Younger Students

It' s generally agreed that, to be most successful, career awareness and exploration activities (for both teachers and students) must begin in the elementary grades and carry through middle school/junior high. **Your goals may include:**

- exposing students and teachers to information about a wide variety of careers, especially non-traditional ones and those that will offer the best opportunities in the next century;
- emphasizing that preparation for many fine careers begins in your technical programs;
- stressing that 80% of the careers of the future do not require four years of college; providing information for students to take home to their parents.

**Target Audiences:** Students . . . Parents . . . Educators

### *What Others Are Doing*

Malaspina University-College in British Columbia has developed a 45-minute presentation called "Fishing for Your Future" to help sixth graders discover the wide variety of careers open to them. Colored posters and mobiles detailing job titles and occupational classifications are sent to schools in advance, and teachers receive pre- and post-presentation packets to use with their students. The basic message is, "Stay in school. There will be work for you."

The Visitors Center in Columbus, Indiana, sponsored ARKIDSFEST, a Children's Architectural Festival that gave youngsters in grades 1-6 a chance to create a willow hut, make constructions of cardboard, make architectural rubbings, plan and build a sand city and become certified "Architectives".

## 5. Workshops and Meetings

Workshops and other kinds of meetings are an excellent way to introduce your programs to every audience you need to reach. (And it's good to mix all of them in discussion groups.) **Your goals may include:**

- stressing the advantages of School-to-Careers programs and counteracting the misleading information opponents have spread
- exposing participants to information about a wide variety of careers emphasizing that the careers that will offer the best opportunities in the next century are the ones students can begin to prepare for in your programs
- emphasizing that many fine careers do not require four years of college

**Target Audiences:** Educators . . . Parents . . . Policymakers

### *What Others Are Doing*

Parents can be reached effectively in the workplace. Employers bring their lunch to a central location to hear a representative of the Upper Rio Grande Consortium talk about tech prep and career and technology education. The project resulted from a phone survey of 800 parents, which indicated the majority were unaware of the free technical programs available at the high school level.

The Nash-Rocky Mount School System in Nashville, North Carolina, sponsors an annual Business/Education Summit. The first one in 1992 focused on workforce needs and what could be done to meet them. More recently, the meeting has celebrated the School-to-Work program, noting accomplishments all across the system, including the elementary schools. During the meeting, business leaders receive notebooks filled with lesson plans teachers have developed after spending professional development time in the workplace.

A consortium in Cabarrus County, North Carolina, used its business/education summit at the Speedway Club at the Charlotte Motor Speedway as a forum to raise community awareness of the need for workforce development and its connection to continued prosperity – an issue that is hard for people to get excited about in a community where the economy is booming. The summit provided national and international perspectives with lots of demographics.

High school counselors are invited to send female students interested in horticulture/turf management, machine tool or design drafting to a nontraditional careers workshop sponsored by Linn Technical College. Participants enjoy a panel discussion, lunch and a 30-minute hands-on session in each program.

## 6. Publications and Surveys

Publications, especially if they're a bit unusual, can get the specific message you want to send to the exact audience you want it to reach. **Your goals may include:**

- informing, interesting and exciting readers
- creating a favorable public opinion of your program
- dispelling myths about career/technical education
- arousing readers to action

**Target Audiences:** Students . . . Parents . . . Educators . . . Employers . . . Policymakers

### *What Others Are Doing*

The Office of Career and Technology Education in the Corpus Christi Independent School District publishes three issues a year of Real Learning, a vocational magazine that highlights outstanding students, teachers, community leaders and businesses.

A Business Resource Guide produced by the Upper Rio Grande Tech Prep Consortium lists business people who will speak to classes, welcome students and teachers for shadowing experiences or accept co-op students. Up to 1,000 copies a year are distributed to schools. It's especially valuable to counselors setting up Career Day programs.

The Workforce Development Program (formerly called vocational education) in the Carteret County (North Carolina) School District publishes a monthly pictorial newsletter, highlighting outstanding activities with photos and brief cutlines – an inviting format for short-on-time readers.

Surveys of the business community can provide valuable information and build goodwill from the personal contacts involved. The School-to-Work Opportunities Task Force in Asheville, North Carolina, in cooperation with schools in the surrounding counties, sent out a five-page survey that will help them develop a three- to five-year plan to implement workforce preparedness initiatives.

## 7. Unusual/Just-for-Fun Activities

Many of the professionals interviewed for this chapter described unusual, just-for-fun activities that have been extremely successful. **They can help you achieve such goals as:**

- attracting public attention and approval
- informing the public about positive, exciting things going on in your school

**Target Audiences:** Students . . . Parents . . . Educators . . . Employers . . . Policymakers

### *What Others Are Doing*

Each year drafting students in the Nash-Rocky Mount School System design a play house which is built and wired by carpentry and electricity classes. Cabinet-making students build furniture, home economics classes make draperies, horticulture students supply potted plants, marketing students design posters and graphics classes print raffle tickets, which are sold by all vocational students. The project nets more than $5,000 a year, which funds ten scholarships to the community college.

Look for unique programs in your district that are naturals for media coverage – like the Futures in Restaurant Management Program sponsored by Taco Bell in two high schools in Austin and Smithville, Texas. Students are selected at 16 for the four-year curriculum that includes every phase of the restaurant business. They are paid for work at school and at a Taco Bell location, are eligible for employee benefits and can continue in the articulated degree program at Austin Community College.

Community colleges in Hawaii promote vocational education with such activities as a race of student-built rafts, fashion and hair style shows and the construction of the world's largest gingerbread house (which made the Guiness Book of Records).

The East Central School District in San Antonio worked with heavy equipment dealers to sponsor an activity to acquaint administrators, counselors and teachers with the technical careers available in the field, where significant job growth is anticipated. All sorts of equipment was hauled to a community college campus, where the dealers set up exhibits, made short presentations about the technology required to use the equipment and then let faculty members get some hands-on experience. After a summary of employment opportunities available in the field, participants took a bus tour of all the sites that employ the district' s co-op students.

Mississinewa High School sponsors an annual release of helium balloons carrying laminated cards with information about career programs. Responses have been received from as far away as Connecticut.

For the past ten years, the Career Education Department at Plano (Texas) Independent School District, in cooperation with 60 local restaurants, has hosted "A Taste of Plano" to raise money for scholarships. Every career education program sets up a booth to publicize its activities, and participants who have their "passport" stamped at every booth are eligible for door prizes. It's a great way to get information to the public and to raise money. Last year's net of $38,000 funded 43 scholarships, with winners selected from among 1,300 applicants.

## 8. Cooperative Activities

You don't have to carry out all your marketing activities alone! Look for opportunities to share both the work and expenses with other schools, businesses or community organizations. When you cooperate with others, you'll benefit in several ways. You'll be able to do more and make a bigger impact in the community than you could working alone. You'll reach a much larger market. And, you'll make valuable contacts that will continue to be of benefit in the future.

### *What Others Are Doing*

You can sign up celebrities who may be coming to your community for other events to help you promote school-to-careers. Hillsborough County School District in Tampa, Florida worked with sponsors of the city's annual Strawberry Festival and a local TV channel to arrange for Tanya Tucker, John Anderson and the Oak Ridge Boys to produce PSAs supporting tech plrep and urging students to stay in school. And a local TV personality narrated the district's tech prep video.

The Tech Prep/Career Options Plus program at Metropolitan Community College in Omaha, Nebraska has co-sponsored and/or participated in such activities as the annual luncheon of the Urban League, and the Omaha Chamber of Commerce Business Hall of Fame Awards Dinner.

Involve your students in worthwhile, visible community projects such as Habitat for Humanity. This enables your students to develop community awareness and a sense of responsibility. The best publicity often comes through actions that benefit others.

## Making it Official

Start your School-to-Careers Month celebration in March by preparing an appropriate proclamation. This kit includes a sample. Adapt it to fit your situation.

Send your proclamation to the mayor and/or other appropriate officials with a cover letter signed by the superintendent or school principal/director and the chair of your advisory committee. Stress the importance of public support for students in School-to-Careers programs and ask the mayor to schedule a presentation or proclamation signing ceremony.

Coordinate the arrangements for the ceremony with the mayor's staff. Invite a representative group (10-12 maximum) of school personnel, advisory committee members and students and your media. Make sure the focus of the ceremony is on students. Shoot your own pictures and videotape.

## Chapter 4

# Mall Shows

Nearly 70 percent of all adults visit a shopping mall every week, according to a survey cited a few years ago by the Wall Street Journal. A Vocational Education Week or School-to-Careers Month celebration presented in your most popular mall will reach a wide audience of both teens and adults. AVA recommends it, because it puts you where the public is.

## Start Planning Early

A planning team of 12-15 people must begin its work early – at least six months in advance. They should meet bi-weekly until about six weeks before the mall show, then weekly. (That's a lot of meetings, but there's a lot to be done.) Your team should include representatives of administration, each major department in your school and support personnel. If more than one school is involved, designate an administrator (probably an assistant principal) to coordinate planning in each building and make sure everything is done on time. Each member of the team can head a subcommittee, recruiting other staff members to assist with responsibilities for a particular aspect of the mall show. Of course, your business/industry partners and students need to be actively involved, too.

One of the team's first jobs should be to determine how much money is available for mall show expenses. Set up general guidelines for a budget, but allow some flexibility in moving allocations from one area to another as planning progresses.

## Dealing with the Mall Management

In areas where malls host frequent events, you may need to set a date for your show and reserve space as much as a year ahead. If you're considering a multi-day activity, keep in mind that three days has generally proven to be the maximum time schools can successfully maintain the effort a mall show requires. Use this checklist to plan mall events:

☐ **Appoint one member of your planning team to handle all contacts** with the people in charge of scheduling special activities at the mall. If you talk with them well in advance of the date you want and let them know you're planning an educational show that will benefit students and adults and attract a large crowd, they should be happy to provide space for you. Approach them in a professional manner, with a list of questions in hand.

Mall managers are running a big business. They like special events because they attract additional people and tend to increase sales. They also give the mall a chance to demonstrate its interest in the community beyond commercial transactions. Store owners like special events for the same reasons, and many of them may be willing to help you by placing posters advertising your show in their windows or by donating items for prizes.

☐ **The mall will probably require that you have liability and property damage insurance.** You can often get $1,000,000 liability and $500,000 property damage coverage (designating the mall as a classroom) as a rider on your school's or district's present policy. Additional theft and vandalism coverage is desirable and may also be available as a rider.

☐ **The mall may ask you to sign an agreement** listing the date of your show, the hours during which set-up and take-down are to be completed and other details of your arrangements. Be sure there is a clear understanding about the exact area you will be permitted to use. Even if a contract is not required, you should get this information in writing.

☐ **Obtain a good floor plan of the mall,** indicating electrical outlets and voltage, exhaust ventilation, the best entrances and/or loading docks to use to bring in exhibits and the location of restrooms, elevators, public phones and first-aid stations. Ask if the mall prohibits or requires special placement of booths such as cosmetology or food service that might be in competition with mall businesses. Find out if there are other restrictions you should know about in regard to noise, non-fire resistant materials or weight limits for exhibits. Ask if any activities or displays are specifically forbidden. Talk about the best locations for your information booth and stage (if you'll have special entertainment).

After you have determined the number and kind of exhibits you will have, walk the area with the mall liaison to decide where each one should be located. (Or, if you know how much space you'll be allotted, draw up a layout and go over it with the mall liaison. Some malls will give you free rein, but others will want the final say about the kinds of exhibits allowed and where they will be placed.

In general, each exhibit should be allotted about the same amount of space (an area that accommodates two six- or eight-foot tables, for example), but allow some leeway. And it's good marketing sense to put particularly appealing displays in high-traffic areas to draw visitors into the rest of the show.

Ask about mall rules for expensive equipment left in exhibits overnight. Ask what regulations the mall has in regard to decorations. (Some, for example, ban helium balloons because those that get loose drift so high they are difficult to bring down.) Find out if there are restrictions on signage: Are there limits on the size and number of signs? Can signs welcoming visitors to your show be placed at mall entrances? Must they be professionally done? Will the mall provide sign holders or easels?

Find out if the mall has special guidelines for the conduct and dress of volunteer workers. If not, you should compile your own for students.

☐ **Check on tie-ins with other activities at the mall** on the days of your show. For example, if the Red Cross is holding a fund drive, they might be happy for your Health Occupations students to do blood pressure readings and other simple health checks.

☐ **Ask if the mall can help to advertise your show** by promoting it in internal newsletters for its merchants, in its newspaper or radio/TV promotions or in flyers mailed to customers' homes. Ask if it is permissible for you to contact store managers directly to ask them to display posters advertising your event and/or to donate items or gift certificates to be used as prizes. If so, obtain a list of businesses in the mall, with the manager's names and phone numbers. (The mall liaison may want you to get his/her prior approval of any materials you propose to send to store managers. This is a reasonable request.) If your budget permits, find out if a restaurant in the mall is interested in setting up a buffet to serve lunch and dinner to your volunteer workers. (Tickets for one meal per person can be distributed with name badges as workers check in. An alternative – again, if you can afford it – is to give each volunteer a $5 gift certificate to be used in any mall store or restaurant.) Keep your mall liaison informed as planning progresses during the months before your show, but don't contact him/her more often than you need to. Keep phone calls to a minimum. When questions come up, put them in writing. If you need to speak with the liaison in person, call for an appointment. And remember to say thank you – sincerely and often!

## Exhibits

Decide early – at least three to four months in advance – the number and kind of exhibits you will have, and appoint a person to head the development of exhibits for each career cluster. Think quality and variety and more quality. Nothing else is as important to the success of your mall show. The key question to ask as you plan exhibits is, "Will they provide an opportunity for viewers to become involved?" Use this planning checklist:

☐ **Put action into your exhibits.** Make sure they invite the public in. Face computer screens out, toward passersby, and make sure your people don't sit behind tables that fence visitors out.

☐ **"Touch-and-feel" exhibits are good.** School-to-Careers programs need to become more visible and tangible – something people are literally "in touch" with. It's what hands-on education is all about!

☐ **Attract attention with computers and other equipment.** Even though computers are becoming common household items, they still fascinate people. And they'll be amazed to see all the ways students use them. Set up a CAD system and let visitors try their hand. No one can resist. An airplane or a car students have restored is a crowd-stopper, too.

☐ **Remember that students are your best salespeople.** Pick the right ones, put them out front and let them do their stuff. (Sometimes the kid whose classroom antics drive the teacher nuts is the perfect one for this job!)

☐ **Spend some money.** You'll be presenting yourself to the public in a glitzy, commercial environment, and you can't afford to look tacky or "home-made" in comparison. AVA has many products to help you present a professional image.

☐ **Greet on your feet!** Smart mall show people never sit down on the job. It's easy to get exhausted, so schedule floaters – to provide breaks for workers.

☐ **Give visitors something to take home.** People love freebies. (Order "Get Your Career in Gear" logo items from AVA!)

## *Special Booth Ideas !*

**Plan special booths for your admissions, job placement and adult education personnel.** Have computers set up with application forms, so that admissions counselors can take information from interested students on the spot and follow up with visits to their home schools. Parents are particularly interested in job placement. It's a good idea to have representatives of major employers sharing this booth with your own people, to let parents know that your graduates are in demand. Adult ed instructors will have a great opportunity to let visitors know that your career programs are not for kids only.

**If you have a Graduates' Hall of Fame,** featuring photos and write-ups, display these near the job placement booth and have as many as possible of the honorees, wearing special identification badges or ribbons, available to talk with visitors about the head start your school gave to their careers. If students attend your school full-time, you undoubtedly offer academic classes, special education services, sports and other extracurricular activities. Feature these in special displays to let people know that your school provides a well-rounded program. If your programs are articulated with one or more post-secondary schools in your area as most good ones are these days have college reps on hand to talk about the opportunities for continuing education. Parents need to know that School-to-Careers is a college-bound program.

## Show Off your Programs

As any sharp publicist knows, the trick is to find the "hook" that grabs public attention and makes people want to see just what it is you're up to. Look at each of your programs and think about what they have to offer that is unique, surprising or provides unusual opportunities for hands-on involvement. Here are some examples:

**AC/Heating** – Do computerized energy audits from utility bills.

**Agricultural Mechanics** – Repair small engines. Sharpen chain saws. Tear down and reassemble a diesel engine. Invite the public to torque a bolt.

**Animal Care** – Demonstrate grooming techniques in cooperation with a mall pet store.

**Auto Technology** – Hook up a computer analyzer to a simulator. Show how a fuel injector works. Display the old screwdrivers and pliers needed to fix a car in 1920 next to the computer analyzer used today. Show why it takes a smart kid to be an automotive technician in the '90s!

**Carpentry** – Show a model of a house under construction by the class. Build a storage shed and take sealed bids or let people register to win it.

**Child Care** – Set up a child "corral" and offer baby-sitting services with activities supervised by students.

**Commercial Art** – Demonstrate a variety of art techniques, from air brush to computer graphics, and let visitors try their hands. Show art in various stages of completion. Do portraits and caricatures.

**Computer** – Set up a bank of computers and demonstrate desktop publishing. Have programs for visitors to try. Pre-enter a layout and wording for a certificate, print visitors' names and give them copies.

**Cosmetology** – Set up a mini-salon, offering free manicures, haircuts and styling. Hold a drawing for coupons for free services at the in-school shop. (Be sure not to cause hard feelings by competing with mall salons.)

**Drafting** – Demonstrate CAD and hand out samples. Invite visitors to see how well they can read mechanical blueprints.

**Electrical** – Set up a display board showing common wiring mistakes. Demonstrate a *model burglar alarm system that visitors* can work and students can explain.

**Electronics** – Show off a robot, with a diagram explaining how it works. Demonstrate a sound- or proximity-activated light device.

**Food Prep** – Prepare and offer taste samples. Demonstrate cake decorating and unique table settings.

**Graphic Arts** – Let visitors set their own type for personalized notepads. Demonstrate how computer programs are used to create graphics.

**Health Occupations** – Take blood pressure and pulse readings, conduct eye and weight checks and give participants a little card with results.

**Horticulture** – Set up a lawn planting display and give away flowers and tip sheets on spring lawn and garden care. (AVA has seed packets for sale that make great give-aways.)

**Machining** – Show off air motors built by students, rigged so they are control-led or speed-varied or driving something. Set up a strobe light to display the RPM of motors.

**Masonry** – Demonstrate brick, block and stone laying, and let visitors try their hands.

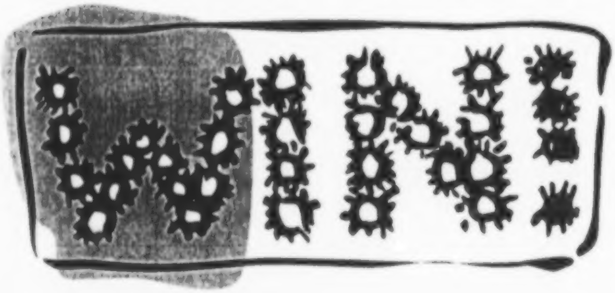
**Marketing** – Conduct a computerized survey about visitors' impressions of the mall show. Cooperate with mall shops to hold a style show with students as models. Sell school t-shirts and other items.

**Welding** – Equip a mannequin as a welder standing on a girder to simulate the top of a structure. A flashing strobe light will add to the impact. Invite visitors to try out a computerized welding simulator.

## Show Events

Activities like a talent show (with acts by your students and staff auditioned and selected ahead of time) can draw extra attention to your area. The talents displayed don't have to relate to the career programs, but make sure the announcer tells what program each participant is associated with and what each student's career goals are.

An audience-participation game show is another attention getter. A mall show in suburban St. Louis used a "Careers of Fortune" game, modeled on "Wheel of Fortune", as a way of informing the crowd about the many careers students could prepare for at the technical high schools. Radio disk jockeys served as emcees, reading numbered clues about a career, as teens spun the wheel and picked letters to be turned by "Vanna". Winners received prizes donated by mall merchants.



You may be able to arrange with local radio stations for disk jockeys to do live-remote broadcasts from the mall, interviewing instructors, students and employers, commenting on all the exciting activities going on and attracting more people to the event. (Make up in advance a schedule of key people to be interviewed and assign someone to make sure each of them gets to the radio booth on time.)

**Tip:** Place registration forms for prize give-aways and large fishbowls for collecting them at several locations in the mall, with large signs to attract attention to them. Or pass out cards that need to be stamped or punched at each booth (or a specific number of displays) in order to be eligible for prizes. Provide space for the visitor's name, address and phone number and, if he/she is a student, the grade level and school currently attended.

## Volunteers

The success of a mall show rests on the enthusiasm and dedication of its volunteers. If there are other schools with School-to-Careers programs nearby, you may want to work together to present a great show in a single mall – or to present shows simultaneously in several malls.

A cooperative effort means just that. Do not turn your mall show into a competition to see which school can present the best displays. This will build resentment and destroy the positive spirit that carries over from workers to visitors at a successful show. In this instance, turf is unimportant. You are there to show the public that School-to-Careers programs mean opportunity, and each school should share equally in visibility and credit.

Encourage faculty to plan cooperatively and to produce one great exhibit for each program the schools have in common. Decide whether to assign blocks of time for each participating school to staff each exhibit or to mingle staff and students from several schools in each time block. The former makes carpooling easier, but the latter promotes camaraderie and professional networking.

**Tip:** Two months prior to your mall show, distribute forms to all staff members to see what responsibilities they will volunteer for. (Not if they want to be involved; it should be assumed that everyone will take part!) About four weeks before the show, develop a work schedule, divided into four- to six-hour time slots, and have building coordinators sign up staff and student volunteers. (You need some of both in each slot to be most effective). Line up workers for special assignments, too – the information booth, students to hand out flyers at the mall entrances and floaters to relieve workers during meal breaks. Arrange for two or more people to serve as official photographers, both still and video. Make a list of things they must not forget to photograph.

Distribute a copy of the work schedule to each volunteer at least a week before the show, along with any regulations the mall has that apply to them. Prepare a special handout for student volunteers, stressing proper dress, language and conduct. If necessary, arrange transportation for students from pick-up points to the mall and back. If you're planning a student talent show, audition and select numbers and make up a schedule for them to perform.

## On-Site Management

Here's a checklist for managing your exhibit:

- ☐ **Set Up and Tear Down.** These jobs require lots of after-hours work. Plan to move in after the mall closes the night before your show opens to set up tables, backdrops and signs, so that everything will be ready for teachers to bring in their exhibits early the next morning. If exhibits will not be divided by drapes or ropes on stanchions, mark the corners of each exhibit area with masking tape, to show teachers exactly where the boundaries are. Make sure you have enough help to be completely set up before the mall opens the next morning. Scurrying around to finish doesn't look professional. For the same reason, don't begin to take down exhibits before the mall closes, and make sure everything is gone before it opens the next day. Leave the area in good shape when exhibits are removed.
- ☐ **Arrive as soon as the mall opens** (probably 7 a.m.) to lay out nametags, organize the information booth and be ready to greet volunteers who arrive at 8 or 8:30 to prepare for the mall opening at 10 or so.
- ☐ **Keep an eye out for reporters and photographers** so that you can accompany them around the mall show, answer questions and arrange for interviews. Watch for VIP guests, too, and make sure someone escorts them on a tour of the exhibits. Circulate through the exhibits every hour or so to make sure things are running smoothly.

## Follow-up

### *The week after the mall show:*

- ☐ Send a thank-you note to everyone who contributed in any way – staff and student volunteers, media, merchants, the mall liaison, radio personalities, building coordinators, lay people, graduates, advisory committee members, "notables" and anyone else who was involved. Include an evaluation form in each thank-you note. (See sample in this kit.) For non-school people, include a stamped envelope for returning the evaluation.
- ☐ Hold a drawing for attendance prizes. Arrange for admissions counselors to deliver those won by students. Mail prizes won by adults or contact them about picking up items too large or heavy to mail.
- ☐ Have photos developed, with an extra set for each school that participated. If you have video footage, make a copy for each school. An edited version is nice, but if you don't have the capability to do this, staff will enjoy seeing unedited footage.
- ☐ If there are weekly papers that didn't cover the mall show, send photos and cutlines to them.
- ☐ See that admissions counselors get the name and address of every eligible student who registered at the show, so that personal contact can be made.
- ☐ Pay all bills promptly.

### *Two to three weeks after the mall show:*

- ☐ When most of the evaluation forms have been returned, prepare a summary of the most frequent comments. Make copies of all the forms, plus the summary, and distribute them at a final meeting of the planning team. Have the team evaluate the show and make recommendations for next year.
- ☐ Prepare a scrapbook of photos and a file of materials used at the mall show. Include memos, letters, purchase orders, publications, the evaluation summary and other items related to the show, along with the planning team's recommendations for next year.
- ☐ Reserve next year's date at the mall. (Right now, you probably think you can never do this again, but you will!)

# Media Campaign

The best way to reach large numbers of people with the message about your programs or about special celebrations is through a strong media campaign, using newspapers, radio and TV. You may also consider such supplementary media as cable TV, billboards, stuffers in utility bills and advertising on grocery bags or placemats in fast-food restaurants.

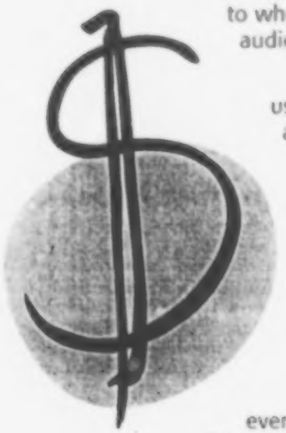
Because School-to-Careers Month is event-oriented, it's an ideal time to involve the media, but you have to plan in advance exactly what you hope to accomplish with a media campaign. The less specific your goals are, the fewer positive results you will see and the harder it will be to evaluate your activities.

For maximum effectiveness, your media campaign should include both publicity and advertising. Though related, they are not the same thing. You work to get publicity; you pay for advertising. Both cost you something, but if done well, both pay dividends.

## Advertising

Advertising is air time and column inches for which you generally pay. When you pay for an ad, you are in complete control of what will be said and when and how often the ad will appear. If you can afford it, advertising will add greatly to the benefits you reap from publicity alone.

### *Buying Media:*



When planning an advertising campaign, first determine what your message is and to whom it is directed, then decide on the best medium for the job. Message and audience should always control the choice of media.

All media, to some extent, target specific audiences. Even if you could afford to use them all, it might not be an effective use of resources. Analyze the media available, ask for figures to substantiate their audience and pick ones that do the best job of reaching the people you want to inform and influence. The more focused, or targeted, your message is, the more effective it will be.

If your advertising budget is limited, it is usually better to concentrate on one medium, rather than spreading your dollars too thinly over several. The same holds true for selecting an outlet (radio station, newspaper, TV channel or billboard company) within a given medium.

Media buys are generally priced on the basis of circulation – how many people read, watch, listen to or drive by. The bigger the audience, the higher ad rates will be. Fortunately, you don't need to get your message to everyone. Pick the media and outlets that will accomplish your goals. If money is a problem, consider asking business/industry partners or major suppliers to sponsor or donate advertising time and space.

When you buy air time, stations will often run additional ads free as public service announcements (PSAs). Sometimes they'll use PSAs without a contract for paid ads, but you'll usually get better time placement for your free spots if you're paying for others.

### *Constructing the Message:*

A newspaper, radio or TV station will often help you put together a message that will be effective in its medium. As you construct your ad, keep in mind that the basic purpose of advertising is to compel action. To accomplish this, make sure your ads do two things:

- Concentrate on the benefits you can provide your audience. The question people ask most is, "What's in it for me?" Be sure to tell them.
- Tell your audience exactly what you want them to do – see their counselor, sign up, come to the School-to-Careers Mall Show.

### *Specialized Media:*

In addition to the traditional advertising media of newspaper, TV and radio, there are many other possibilities. You may want to consider:

- **Direct Mail** – Very effective if you have a highly targeted mailing list.
- **Billboards** – Big, bold, constant repetition, but a very short message. Best used to reinforce other media.
- **Cable TV** – Has a better defined audience than commercial TV and is much less expensive.
- **Weekly Newspapers and Shoppers' Guides** – Less expensive, better targeted geographically (and often better read) than daily papers.
- **Bus/Subway Cards** – These mini-billboards are a good medium for a short message if your community relies heavily on public transportation.
- **Specialty Items** – Key chains, balloons, ice scrapers, bumper stickers, decals, pens, pencils, coffee mugs with a special message. A great way to get School-to-Careers programs in front of people and keep them there. See the AVA Professional Resources and Promotional Events catalogs for many "Get Your Career in Gear" items.

## Publicity

Publicity is media coverage you get without paying for it, but it usually involves staging an event or activity that is newsworthy, which takes both work and wits. The trick is to devise a way to turn some angle of your program into news. Here are some ideas:

- Tie what your school is doing to a current topic of interest that's being covered by the media, thus providing a local angle.
- Organize a VIP tour of your school.
- Conduct a survey on a provocative topic, such as a five-year follow-up on the earning power of your grads and announce the results.
- Hold a contest and honor winners.
- Plan special events, such as a mall show or a speech by a high-profile person. For other newsworthy activities, see Chapters 3 and 4.

### *What's News?*

News is new, unusual, significant and timely information. To be of interest to the media, a news story should have a focus that local people will be interested in. It must include specific information – names, dates, times, places and actions. It's best to build your story around people, not buildings or things. Here are some story ideas:

#### About Students

- Winners of regional, state or national competitions
- Unusual class projects that give students experience in operating a business
- Vocational honor society inductees and group activities
- Students who manage both school and jobs that are part of their educational program, with distinction
- Students who are learning better through integrated academic and vocational classes
- Students whose academic grades have improved since they enrolled in School-to-Careers programs

### About Business and Industry Involvement

- Ways that business and industry are being served by your school
- The role, accomplishments and membership of your advisory committee
- A case study of how a School-to-Careers program has worked successfully with a specific business or industry – good material for a business editor
- A major retraining program your school has provided for a local industry
- Business and industry's belief in your programs, demonstrated through their investment of time, money and people
- How your programs contribute to the area's economic development

### About Graduates and Jobs

- Graduate success stories
- An interview with your job placement person about job-search techniques or industry demand for graduates.
- Comparison of local and national statistics on School-to-Careers programs and preparation for high-demand jobs

### About Community Services

- Free or inexpensive services your school provides to the community
- Seasonal planting, car care or nutrition tips
- A banquet catered by food service students (including recipes) – a good feature for the food section
- Student-operated day-care programs
- Construction programs where students actually build houses or other facilities

## *Media Contacts:*

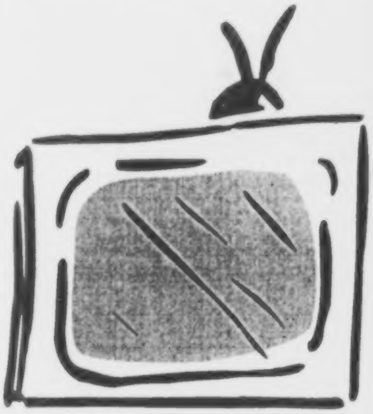
Make a list of the media in your area that you will want to contact, with addresses and phone numbers. Call each of them, identify yourself and ask for the name and title of the person to whom your news releases should be sent. Address your materials to people, not positions. Envelopes and cover letters directed to "the editor" are apt to be taken less seriously than those from senders who are professional enough to track down names and titles. Be sure the names are spelled correctly, too. It helps to become personally acquainted with as many of these people as possible before you ask them to use your material.

## *Who's Who in the Media:*

Here are some job titles and descriptions to help you build your media list. To save the time of busy professionals (perhaps on deadline), ask the switchboard operator to whom you should direct your request for the names of people in various positions.

**Print – City Editor or News Editor** (assigns reporters to cover local events); **Section Editor** (in charge of a certain part of the paper, such as the Education Section); **Reporter** (may work on general assignments or specialize in a particular field such as education or politics).

**Broadcast Media – News Director** (determines overall priorities and content of the station's news programs); **Assignment Editor** ( decides what stories to cover and assigns news crews); **Program Producer** (produces local documentaries, information and discussion shows); **Talk Show Producer or Host** (produces local talk shows); **Public Service Director** (approves public service announcements (PSAs) that run on the station).



### *Working With Print Media:*

Discuss your ideas for news coverage with the person who decides on a daily basis what the paper will cover, generally the city editor or news editor. You may be referred to a specific reporter.

Contact reporters with ideas two weeks ahead of your activities (allow more time for coverage of major events) and submit materials at least a week in advance. Weekly newspapers with limited staff may need even more advance time.

Weekly and daily newspapers are an important medium, but don't neglect other outlets. Newsletters published by civic groups, churches, businesses and other organizations will often promote worthy community events. Put up posters on bulletin boards in libraries, grocery stores and apartment buildings. Ask a utility company, department store or bank to include stuffers you provide with their monthly statements to customers.

### *Working with Broadcasters:*

You can't expect to have high impact today if you don't use the broadcast media to disseminate your message. The time frame of TV and radio is day-to-day, so sending something to them two weeks before your event may not work. Try contacting them a few days ahead, with a follow-up call the night before or the morning of the event.

You'll most often work with the assignment editors for TV coverage and the news director for radio coverage. A large radio station may send a reporter to cover a big event, but most do not have staff available for live coverage. One way to increase your chance of coverage is to offer a spokesperson for a brief phone interview.

## How to Prepare your Information

Here are the most common formats for presenting your news:

1. **Media Advisories**
   Short announcements, often in bullet form, that cover just the who, what, when, where and sometimes the why of an event you would like the media to cover. Best used when the event is likely to attract a large crowd and very little background information is needed to get reporters and news crews there. The advisory will get the event on their calendars. For TV stations and newspapers, you may also want to mention photo opportunities.
2. **News Releases**
   The simplest and most direct way to get a story into print or on the radio. News releases should be no more than two pages long (one is even better) and contain the heart of the news in the lead paragraph. (See samples included in this kit.) News releases are generally ineffective in getting TV coverage.
3. **Photos**
   Sometimes a good black-and-white photo will make it into print when the accompanying story won't. Always attach a separate page with a sentence or two about what's happening in the picture. Identify everyone (left to right) by name and title. Double-check the spelling of names.
4. **Calendar Listings and Billboard Announcements**
   An excellent way to announce upcoming events such as open houses, mall shows and other special programs. Check to see which newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations and cable companies run these regularly. Lots of people scan these brief items, and they can help create interest and increase your crowd. Send to print media at least a month in advance and to radio/TV a week ahead.
5. **Features**
   In-depth or human interest stories on people and events take longer to nurture than news articles, but they can pay off in big print spreads or good air time. A feature on an unusual project, person or success story will get widespread attention from the public. To obtain this kind of coverage, you'll need to present a feature idea to a reporter and try to develop his/her interest in it. Or, if you have an idea for a story that would clearly fit in a special section of the paper or on a particular local TV or radio show, call that section editor or program producer three to four weeks ahead of the event.

6. **Editorials**
   Opinion pieces backed by the newspaper or radio/TV station and run in a special section of the paper or at the close of local newscasts. Editorials can be highly influential and valuable in helping get your message across. Keep the editorial page editor informed by sharing convincing facts on a continuing basis. Call to see if you can arrange an editorial in support of School-to-Careers Month. (This is usually easier to do in small communities than in metro areas.)

7. **Public Service Announcements (PSAs)**
   Short spots (from 10 to 60 seconds) or, less frequently, small print ads run at no charge by the various media. As with advertising, concentrate your efforts on the media that do the best job of reaching your target audiences. Make personal contact with the public or community service director several weeks before your event.

   Here are some tips to make your PSAs more appealing and to increase your chances of having them used.

   **TV** PSAs need high-quality visuals. Before producing a spot, you may want to talk with local stations and submit a concept or sample script. You will save money if you can interest the station in producing the spot. Competition is keen at stations that provide this service, so your case must be strong.

   If they have the equipment and experience, school media people may be able to produce PSAs for you, but it won't be a bargain unless the quality is excellent. Your spot will be played next to those of advertisers who spent thousands of dollars. The last thing your programs need is to look amateurish or inept in comparison.

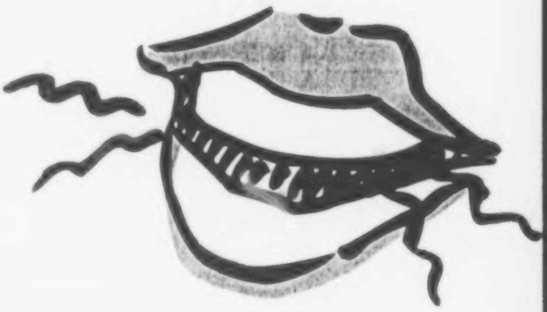
   A reasonable and attractive alternative to a video production is to use good quality horizontal color slides with a script for a voice-over announcer to read. (See samples included in this kit.)

   **Radio** PSAs can be developed from the AVA-prepared scripts in this kit, or you can prepare your own copy. While radio PSAs have a better chance of airing than those for TV, competition is still keen, so limit the number of times you ask for yours to be used. Spots promoting a mall show are more likely to be aired, since it's a free, educational event. On the other hand, a station might feel if it ran your recruiting spots it would have to do something similar for many other schools.

   **Print** PSAs are rare. If a newspaper does agree to give you free space, be prepared to provide camera-ready copy. Small publications are more apt to run your ad than is a large daily paper.

8. **Talk Show Proposals**
   Radio talk shows have become very popular, and producers are often hungry for material. Some have large audiences and provide a good opportunity to present more details and background information about your programs or activities than you can with other publicity formats. Allow a lead time of four to six weeks.

9. **Public Affairs Programs**
   TV stations generally have public affairs programs on their schedules. Try to interest the program producer by suggesting a specific topic. Be sure to mention any visuals you can provide – video clips, slides, models or live demonstrations.



10. **Local Access Cable Channel Programs**
    Most cable companies are now required to provide one or more channels for local programming, which usually includes talk shows and public affairs programs. Contact the cable company (and use the tips above) to get coverage of your activities.

11. **Letters to the Editor**
    This newspaper section is an excellent vehicle for your views on the value of vocational-technical education or school-to-careers programs. Write persuasively, include solid data and use no more than one page. (It's even better if you can get a pleased employer, grad or parent to write a positive letter.)

12. **Remote Broadcast Setups**
    Live radio broadcasts (very rarely TV) can originate from your school or special event location. Invite a disk jockey to air a show from your mall show. Although the station may charge a talent fee, if the personality is well-prepared and enthusiastic, you will benefit from some very valuable air time.
13. **Statement Stuffers**
    - Talk to banks, utility companies and department stores about including a brief message with their monthly bills. They go to nearly every household.
    - Merchant Advertising Supplements
    - Ask if you can piggy-back information about your activity on the store's newspaper ad or direct mail piece.
    - Grocery Bags and Ads
    - Many supermarket chains are looking for good public service announcements.
14. **Restaurant Placemats**
    This is a fun, cost-effective way to promote your programs and students. In a popular fast-food chain, they'll reach a lot of people. (AVA offers placemats for sale for this purpose.)
15. **Special Ad Supplements**
    Newspaper supplements and inserts make a big impact. Persuade a group of business/industry partners to show their support for your program by purchasing paid ads to cover the cost of the supplement. Their involvement will add to the impact, too.
16. **Theater Screen Ads**
    Hillsborough County School District in Tampa, Florida, uses thearter-screen ads to publicize its tech prep programs for six weeks prior to registration for the next school year. This ad space is often available free to non-profit groups if they furnish the slides.

## Publicity Packets

Having your own customized publicity packet for School-to-Careers Month polishes your image with the media and may help you get more coverage for your events. Use your school's pocket folder or purchase blank ones. Be judicious about what you include in each packet. A few items most likely to spark the interest of the recipient are better than a bulging packet that overwhelms. Start with a few all-purpose items you want everyone to receive and then customize packets for specific audiences – radio or TV public service director, newspaper reporter/editor, business person, legislator, school board member or prospective student.

Here's a list of items you may want to include.

- Copy of AVA's fact sheet, "Making the Connection: From School to Career" (available in quantity from AVA catalogs)
- Local or state fact sheets or brochures about School-to-Careers Programs
- AVA brochures such as "8 Facts Every Parent Should Know About Vocational Education," "Life After High School: Vocational-Technical Education as a Route to College" and "Get Your Career in Gear," a brochure for students
- Camera-ready promotional ads and radio or TV PSAs
- Calendar of Events
- News Release and photos with captions
- Voc Ed Week or School-to-Careers Proclamation
- List of resource people at your school who can provide more information

## General Media Tips

- **Know your angle** when you contact a reporter, editor or producer. Stress the unique or compelling nature of your story. Emphasize visual possibilities to TV.
- **Don't get discouraged** if the news person doesn't grab your ideas immediately. It doesn't mean he/she will never be interested. Plant lots of seeds, and some will germinate.
- **Don't call at deadline time.** Increase your chances for a positive reception by knowing when deadlines are. They are inflexible. Respect reporters' needs by calling at other times of day.
- **Always be honest.** It's important to build your credibility with news people. If you can't answer a question, offer to find someone who can. An open approach will get you more positive coverage in the long run, especially when a problem arises.
- **Appoint one individual as spokesperson and media contact.** All press releases should be issued under his/her name. Make sure he/she has copies of everything the media might call to ask about.
- **The media should receive your School-to-Careers Month publicity packet by mid-February.** If possible, hand deliver it, and be sure to include a short cover letter personally addressed to the recipient, explaining why you're sending the packet and giving your name and number as contact person. Packets for school board members and business and government leaders should be sent at the same time.
- **Following through on initial contacts with the media is an important part of your publicity work.** Call two or three days after sending materials to make sure they were received. Offer to answer questions or to hand deliver additional information a reporter may need. Keep your conversations brief. Most news people juggle many stories at once and have little time to waste.

  After your initial contact, be sure to route all news releases about an event to the same person. If for some reason you send the same material to more than one person in the organization, enclose a note listing everyone who received it.

  Call daily newspapers two days before your event. TV people should be reminded the afternoon before a morning event or the morning of a noon or night activity. TV crews are usually back in the studio by 3 p.m. (except for important late-breaking news) to prepare for 5 p.m. news programs.

  When a reporter does a story on your school, send a thank-you note with a copy to the station manager, editor or publisher. Praise some specific element of the story or report on its impact. Like everyone else, news people appreciate a pat on the back, especially when it's called to the attention of their boss.

  Even if there were mistakes in a story or the reporter left out something you felt was important, emphasize the positive. You're going to need his/her cooperation on another occasion. (If there's a factual error that might be repeated in a future story, point it out politely.)

### *Extend Your Publicity Mileage*

If you get good coverage, don't let it end there. Reprint the article and use it in mailings to board members, supporters, legislators and others who need background on your school – with the name of the paper and the date it appeared. (Most newspapers won't expect you to ask for permission to reprint their stories . To be sure, ask before you do it the first time.) It's possible that mentioning good coverage by one paper to reporters from other media might cause them to be interested, too. However, it could have the opposite effect so be careful about what you say. It's best to suggest a new angle when talking to other media.

You can capitalize on TV publicity, too, if you act quickly. Call the station as soon as possible after your story runs and ask if they will make a copy of the tape for you. Get permission to use it as part of videos you put together to show to faculty, potential students, business, industry and government officials. Consider having multiple copies made to send to appropriate people.

## Using AVA Resources

AVA has many resources to help you gain publicity for your School-to-Careers Month activities and for your programs year-round. This kit includes sample news releases, PSAs for both School-to-Careers Month and a mall show, a proclamation, camera-ready logos and letterheads. It also contains samples of AVA publications and specialty advertising items you can order in quantity.

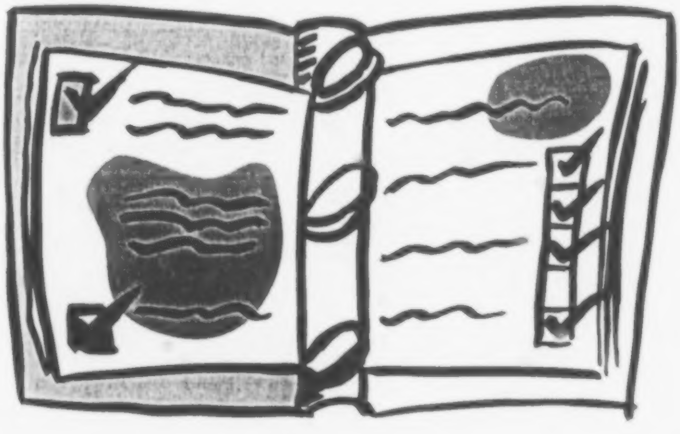
## Help Yourself Next year — Record Your Success and Shortcomings

After any event, you may feel like breathing a sigh of relief and forgetting about it until next year. But this is the best time to do a quick evaluation – while your successes and shortcomings are still fresh in your mind. Get your committee together to talk about your mistakes and what you can do better next time.

Create a file of information, sample documents and clippings and write a detailed report to yourself or the person who will replace you as chair next year, including:

1. What activities did you hold? How many attended each one? How did people hear about your events? What were your most successful displays and demonstrations?
2. What steps did you take to implement each activity? When? Was your timing off at any point?
3. What speaking engagements were booked? Were they successful?
4. What coverage did you receive in the media?
5. What promotional items did you order? How many? What additional items would improve the celebration next year?
6. What feedback did you get from students, faculty, business and industry people and community residents? Include direct quotes and copies of letters.
7. What would you do differently?

This file will help you get off to a fast start in planning next year's celebration. And if a new person is taking over your responsibilities, your notes and sample materials will save him/her many hours and a few mistakes.



# Appendix

In this appendix are two valuable resources:

A collection of articles reprinted from AVA's *Techniques* magazine that constitutes a soup-to-nuts handbook on education program image enhancement strategies. It's all here—case studies of actual successful marketing programs; a plan for reputation management; an expert's analysis of what makes good news; advice on coping with crisis situations; and a report on results of a national survey of parents on their thoughts about vocational-technical education.

A current AVA catalog of promotional materials for use at Voc Ed Week and School-to-Careers Month events and activities. To assure that you receive future copies of this catalog, with new promotional themes and logo items, call AVA Product Sales at 800-826-9972 and ask to be put on the catalog mailing list. That's also the number you call to order any of the items in the catalog.

Other catalogs issued by AVA include the Fall Professional Resources Catalog; the Spring Professional Resources Catalog and the Image Line Catalog of casual wear and recognition items with AVA's trademarked *Creating Futures* logo.

# Going t

Whether you're trying to save a worthy vo-tech program from extinction or boost your school's image in the community, effective marketing can make all the difference. **By Dan Stapleton**

A message to vocational educators: There's no time like the present to toot your own horn.

Everyone has heard the growing gripes about falling enrollment, dwindling funds and our struggling image. But we're also hearing more and more from business and industry. Employers are lauding our tech prep and school-to-work programs because they're producing the skilled professionals they need. So whom have you told? Your answer should be "everybody." It's not enough to send one press release to the local paper. Effective marketing requires a comprehensive plan and a continued commitment.

The National Association of Vocational-Technical Education Communicators has been making a commitment to improving vocational education's image for more than 25 years. NAVTEC , an affiliate of AVA, is composed of more than 200 marketing and design professionals throughout the United States who work in the vocational education field. These voc ed trumpeters use NAVTEC as a professional network. A telephone call or e-mail message to another member can provide free technical support or just a second opinion for the lonely marketing staff of one.

## Be a winner

Each year NAVTEC sponsors a communication awards competition to showcase the best vocational education marketing tools and campaigns in the country. For the 1995-96 competition, NAVTEC received more than 130 entries in 23 categories. A panel of judges—including newspaper, printing, television, marketing and graphic design professionals—chose 53 winners representing 14 states and 25 sites. A variety of categories range from 30-second radio advertisements to entire marketing campaigns, including posters, brochures, videos and more. The winners—which vary in budget and staff size—showcase the level of marketing quality and creativity that vocational institutions must achieve to reach potential students and gain community support.

On these pages are profiles of four NAVTEC winners to offer a glimpse of their image-building strategies. To find out more about NAVTEC or the awards competition, contact Dan Stapleton at (573) 882-3222 or pavtds@tiger.coe.missouri.edu.

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***Dan Stapleton was coordinator of the NAVTEC Communication Awards competition until last year. He is assistant director of the Instructional Mat-erials Laboratory in the Practical Arts and Vocational-Technical Education Department at the University of Missouri-Columbia's College of Education.***

# Market?

## Tips for Effective Marketing

NAVTEC judges use these guidelines and several others when reviewing entries:

- The print, audio or video marketing piece should address a specific audience. These may include high school students, parents, adult students and industry.
- The color and design treatment of the marketing piece should reflect its audience. Fast-paced and multi-angled MTV-like images appeal to high school audiences. Pieces directed toward older audiences, such as parents, business representatives or high school counselors, should include more conventional typefaces, colors and design elements.
- The information included in the marketing piece should be concise, cogent and useful. The days of the dry article in the local newspaper are over. People want to know quickly and in practical terms how they can benefit from vocational education.
- The production quality of the marketing piece should look professional. The marketing scheme may be outstanding, but poor presentation directly affects the image of the vocational program or institution.

These goals seem straightforward, but the road to achieving them might not be. Marketers at vocational institutions face a barrage of obstacles. Many marketing "staffs" consist of only one person, who may not have a background in design or advertising. Most staffs have a very limited budget to work with. Others are in large cities where the rates for television spots or commercial design are more expensive. So here are a few more bits of advice:

- Communicate the importance of marketing to the administration, the school board, or whoever holds the purse strings. As one NAVTEC award winner said, "Marketing is an investment, not an expense." Point out enrollment numbers, dwindling or growing, to illustrate the need for effective marketing.
- Create or upgrade the in-house design staff. This requires expanding the budget for additional staff but will eliminate the need for costly outside design jobs every time a new project comes up. If this is impossible, ask design firms or independent designers about reduced rates for schools.
- Make sure to market a quality vocational education program. The best marketing plan in the world can't sell a poor product. It's just as important to back all your marketing efforts with an excellent program.

## Carroll Technical Institute

**997 South Highway 16**
**Carrollton, GA 30116**
**(770) 836-6800**
**Marketing staff: 2**
**Annual budget: $80,000-90,000**

A town Fourth of July parade usually includes the high school band and the mayor waving to the crowd from a convertible. Ocassionally the Shriners will make an appearance, driving around in those funny little racecars.

In Carrollton, Georgia, the town parade also includes smiles and waves from the students and faculty at Carroll Technical Institute. They participate as a friendly reminder to the community that there's always room for one more student.

"More than anything we want to let them know what we offer and that we're here for continuing education," Kim Frank says. Frank, officially Carroll Tech's director of institutional advancement, is one of two people charged with marketing the school and drawing more students to its associate degree and certificate programs.

Frank has a background in marketing and advertising and works with assistant Kelly Loftin, who is responsible for public relations. Their budget includes travel and related expenses, but not salaries.

Carroll Tech won three first-place NAVTEC awards last year for its four-color brochure "Keeping Pace With Technology," its two-color brochure "Keeping Pace With the Workplace" and its 1995-96 general catalog. For the most part Frank designs and Loftin writes. And though Frank says it's difficult to measure the effectiveness of their marketing efforts, she notes that Carroll Tech's enrollment of about 2,000 is on the rise. There also is a question on the school's application asking how new students learned about the school.

"We also try to get as many press releases out as possible," Frank says, which is about four each week. "We also do regular paid advertising on the radio and newspapers. And now we're looking at advertising on local cable."

Frank has a ready source of information for brochures and advertisements each year because another department at Carroll Tech is responsible for disseminating annual school statistics to the faculty. Frank is able to pull information from these reports—such as the 100 percent job placement rate for last year's air conditioning technology class of 13—and present them to a target audience.

**Here are some more tips:**

- Keep in touch with the community as much as possible. Participate as a school in community activities, like parades, career fairs and high school parent nights.
- Set an advertising goal for yourself. Try getting at least one mention each week in your local paper (easier to do in rural areas). This means sending four or five press releases every week.
- Get involved with your local chamber of commerce. This way you can be included in the chamber's materials and activities.

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## Polytech School District

**P.O. Box 97**
**Woodside, DE 19980-0097**
**(302) 697-8663**
**Marketing staff: 1½**
**Annual budget: $15,000-20,000**

Polytech School District must market its programs to alter the automatic feed of middle school students into their assigned comprehensive high schools. Like many vocational-technical schools, Polytech's programs are a choice, not a given.

"We work very much like a magnet school in that students come to us from various other school districts," explains Debbie Schiffer, who recently left her marketing position at Polytech for a job closer to her home. "If students did nothing they would just go to their home school. In order for those students to know about us and be aware of what their choices are, we have to do some pretty aggressive marketing."

The Polytech School District is made up of a full-time vocational-technical high school and its adult education programs. It serves about 1,100 high school students and about 7,000 adults each year in 19 vocational programs. Schiffer, who has an extensive background in marketing, had the help of a part-time secretary. Other than that, Schiffer did the bulk of the designing and writing for brochures, catalogs and advertisements. She even did a little amateur camera work.

At the 1995 Polytech picnic—an annual event to welcome new high school students and their parents—Schiffer took video and recorded comments from current students and their parents, faculty and alumni. She also snapped photographs.

Schiffer says the picnic attracts about 2,000 people. There is no program, just a relaxed atmosphere where people can eat and talk with one another.

"I took a video camera and microphone and just walked around and stuck the mike in people's faces," Schiffer recalls. "I just asked questions like, 'Why do you like Polytech?' or 'What does Polytech mean to you?' And I got all of these wonderful impromptu answers."

Schiffer combined the video, recorded comments and photographs to create one sweeping marketing campaign called "Make the Right Choice." It won second-place NAVTEC awards for its radio and video advertisements. The overall campaign earned an honorable mention.

By combining the audio and video jobs, Schiffer was able to save money at the production studio, paying about $10,000 total for a promotional video, a television ad and a radio ad. She used the photographs she took in print materials.

"When times get tight [for schools] it seems that the first thing that goes is marketing," Schiffer says. "Marketing is an investment, not an expense ... You have to remember that you're not top priority on everyone else's agenda. You really have to work to keep your name in the marketplace."

**Here are some more tips:**

- Give your marketing tools a similar look, sound and feel to create a common image and message.
- Try printing promotional ads on paper placemats and ask your local restaurants to use them. It's inexpensive and you have a captive audience waiting for food.

## Tulsa Technology Center

**6111 East Skelly Drive**
**Tulsa, OK 74147-7200**
**(918) 627-7200**
**Marketing staff: 5**
**Annual budget: $350,000-400,000**

When it comes to marketing vocational education programs, Tulsa Technology Center has got a leg up on most schools. It's no secret that Oklahoma is among the strongest voc ed states in the country, and that strength trickles down to Tulsa Tech's marketing efforts. A marketing staff of five may not impress the CEO of a large business, but it's more than double what most vocational programs have.

"If we didn't have the staff, we couldn't do what we do," says Jan Keim, Tulsa Tech's director of marketing. "We would be spending so much money on contracting [projects] out ... We're able to do a lot in-house to offset production costs." Keim adds that cooperative efforts with business and industry is an effective way to keep expenses down.

Tulsa Tech is an area vocational-technical center that serves between 1,500 and 2,000 high school students from 23 surrounding schools. It also has about 1,000 adult students during the day and another 15,000 to 20,000 adult students enrolled in evening classes. Tulsa Tech has six campuses and its own school board.

The marketing staff includes Keim, a marketing assistant, a public relations coordinator, a marketing specialist (who focuses on the Tulsa Tech Web site) and an artist/designer. They all are full-time employees.

Tulsa Tech earned three first-place NAVTEC awards last year for its one-color poster "Preparing People for Success in the Workplace," its thirtieth anniversary celebration campaign and its overall promotional campaign "Preparing People for Success."

Keim suggests that marketing staffs pursue healthy budgets, asking higher-ups for 1 to 2 percent of the school's overall budget. Having had six years of marketing experience in business and industry, Keim says that 2 percent is pretty much the norm.

"Education traditionally has had the public service type of thinking. That's not the best way to get your message out," Keim says. "... You've got to market yourself. You're competing with others. You're competing for students' time."

One of most comprehensive marketing campaigns Keim has led at Tulsa Tech focused on the school's name change in 1992 from Tulsa County Area Vocational-Technical School District 18. Keim says the new name and logo has brought Tulsa Tech into the '90s.

"There's nothing more dramatic than a name change," Keim says. "We did it to really change that perception that people had of who we are. ... People have a perception about that term—vocational—and we see it every day when we bring people to our classrooms and our campuses."

**Here are some more tips:**

- If possible, try saving part of your annual budget for the professional development of your staff.
- Leave the date out of some of your more general marketing pieces so you can recycle them the next year.

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## Clovis Community College

**417 Schepps Boulevard**
**Clovis, NM 88101-8381**
**(505) 769-2811**
**Marketing staff: 1½**
**Annual budget: $146,000***

Like many young people, Carolyn Edwards wanted to be a doctor when she grew up. But halfway through college she abandoned that idea for something more up her alley—commercial art and advertising. Now she is working on her twelfth year at Clovis Community College as its director of marketing and public information. And aside from some part-time help from a secretary, she's the whole staff.

"I'm very limited," Edwards says about her marketing budget. "The total budget [last] year was $146,000, (*)including salaries for three people, travel, equipment, etc."

Clovis is a mostly rural area, rich in agriculture and ranching. Enrollment at the college peaks during the summer at about 2,000 students. Nearby Cannon Air Force Base traditionally has played a large part in adding to the college's enrollment. But like many military bases in recent years, Cannon is downsizing and Edwards has been successful in keeping enrollment numbers steady and rising.

"We've really been holding our breath for the last two or three years," Edwards says. "But we're still maintaining."

Her main goal in these efforts has been just trying to get the college's name into people's heads, Edwards adds. Considering her limited budget, she made one of her main marketing investments last April during Community College Month when she developed a one-color ad that included impressive statistics about the college's programs. NAVTEC gave the ad, "Celebrate Learning—Community College Month," first-place recognition.

Like many schools, Clovis has cut back on using the word "vocational" in its marketing pieces, Edwards says, opting for the words "career" and "technical."

A relatively easy and inexpensive marketing tool for Edwards is setting up camp at the town's shopping mall. During Community College Month, Edwards, faculty and students set up informational booths, talk to passersby about the college's programs and hand out information.

Another inexpensive but effective marketing strategy for the college is bringing high school counselors to the campus for a tour and orientation of the programs, a few of them being graphic arts, auto technology, building construction trades and digital electronics. Edwards sets aside other days to bring high school students to the campus. She also runs ads in the high school newspaper and does a great deal of radio advertising.

**Here are some more tips:**

- Be clear about what your marketing goals should be. Encourage input from faculty and administration.
- Make sure to represent your school's student body in your photos and video. If you have a nice multicultural or age mix, show it.

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# REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

## WHO NEEDS AN IMAGE?

### A RENOWNED PR COUNSELOR TOUTS ONE-ON-ONE RELATIONSHIP BUILDING AS THE ONLY ROAD TO LASTING CUSTOMER LOYALTY AND SUPPORT.

By Pat Jackson

Most people have a really hard time distinguishing between image and reputation. I don't even want an image for the organizations I represent. Why? An image, remember, is false.

Reputation is real. It's based on experience. Once I have experience with an organization and its services, any image I may have had is immediately driven out anyway. Image is this false thing that we build up, and it backfires if we can't deliver.

In the case of vocational-technical education, the danger is really there. Because two-thirds of school-system owners—the voters, who are the true customers of the school systems, are empty nesters or nonparticipants who have no direct connection with schools. Even fewer have a direct connection to vo-tech. So a huge majority of people who own your institution have no link to you whatsoever.

You have to communicate a true reputation that they will trust enough to give you the support you need. People do not give support based on image. But if they have some interaction, if they know someone who says, "Well, *my* son went ... or *my* daughter did ... or *I* did ...," now you're talking.

I'll give you an example. The community college system in Phoenix, Arizona, has strategically, over 25 years, tailored offerings so it could continually reach those people in Maricopa County who are outside its network. They have taken courses into shopping malls, they have done everything they can do so that voters have exposure to the offerings of the community college. Remember, Phoenix is a town that disappears every five years—20 percent of the population turns over every year. Despite that, 68 percent of the voters have had some direct contact with the Maricopa Community College system. It is interesting that its bond issues always pass. They have truly built a reputation with people by serving them.

There are three ways to approach reputation management:

- **Proactive:** You set out to build and keep the reputation of your organization.
- **Defensive:** Your reputation is under some kind of attack, and you need to counter it.
- **Maintenance:** You have a good reputation, and you just want to keep that going.

Let's talk about the proactive approach here—something that can put you in charge of driving public opinion of your school or program.

Being proactive means going out and finding support—not just the people who sort of "feel good" about education, I mean people who are willing to get up out of their chairs and give you true, behavioral support when you need it. These are not only the business people who donate equipment and come to you to discuss curriculum but also the person who would go over to the church supper and be willing to

stand up for the school. When Charlie starts talking about how local taxes should be cut, starting with elimination of the vo-tech [school], our guy is the person who says, "You know, Charlie, I certainly understand your point of view. But here are some data" or some kind of experience he can relate to show why the vo-tech school is important to the community.

How do you motivate that kind of behavior?

**You begin with awareness.** There's still room for a little of that media work we all are so fond of doing, but don't waste too much time on that. The paper can run 52 good stories and it doesn't mean a thing unless the readers already thought you were pretty good. It's called selective perception—we evaluate new information based on what we already believe.

But 98 percent of us won't do anything about 96 percent of the subjects we deal with just based on information. We need more.

**After awareness, our minds move to a state of "latent readiness."** If you can design a message that keeps a concept in someone's mind for 30 seconds or more, their brain automatically opens a file on that subject. It's totally subconscious. When a person's brain opens a file on vo-tech, that person will be deciding whether she wishes to behave positively, negatively or do nothing.

**What really spurs behavior is a "triggering event."** Take the voter who understands there is a vo-tech system. He's heard some good things and some bad things, but on balance he feels pretty good about it. The trigger is a bond issue, or maybe a bad accident in one of the labs. Or maybe a secretary runs off with the principal, so it becomes a scandal. Or maybe it's my daughter entering ninth grade and seeing that the best thing for her at that moment is to move into vo-tech.

When you spring a triggering event, such as an open-house for the parents of ninth-graders, you assemble a lot of people known as a captive audience. Now you're dealing with people who are right for you, not Joe Sixpack.

In the 1980s, every hospital was buying ads. What a waste of time. Instead, what are they doing now? Scheduling classes: Come and learn about osteoporosis or psychological counseling for mothers of teens. They are building relationships, which offers a better chance of moving people toward changing their behaviors.

Is this behavioral model important? You bet it is. All the brochures, all the media, even the word of mouth that has no basis in any relationship is so fragile it could go away in a minute.

Take my AT&T client as an example. Is there anyone here who's eager to see some more TV commercials about long distance services? Would you like some more telemarketing calls? How about some more direct mail? See the problem? Mass marketing doesn't work.

So how is AT&T going to survive? We are putting together the largest ambassador program in history. Every AT&T employee—about 120,000 of them—will be trained to communicate the company's message. All the vendors and suppliers to AT&T—guess what? Their employees will be encouraged to be ambassadors, and so will AT&T retirees. Pretty soon you've got a million people doing one-on-one relationship marketing.

According to AT&T research, 70 percent of the reason people say they like a product or service has almost everything to do with the way they are treated by the organization. There's a whole bunch of school administrators out there who think that if they just get the test scores up, everything will be super. Let me tell you, nobody will know or give a rap. I guarantee you that the people who want to de-fund the schools will say, "Well, they only went up 2 percent, or they only went up 10 percent."

People have one question about every organization, and only one: Can I trust the people who make up the organization?

The first thing to do is make sure you have the right person talking about your school at the right moment. The superintendent is the one to talk when you are in deep trouble, or when you have a blockbuster announcement to make. The chief operating officers (the principals or other senior people) and the rest of the school family should be talking about program details. But don't forget the other members of the community who can be ambassadors for your school or program:

- Parents of students. Encourage them to get the word out.
- Vendors and suppliers. Too often we just treat them like, you know, "bring in the pencils and then get your truck out of the drive." What we really should be doing is saying, "Hi, Judy, have you got a minute? I want to show you the latest thing we've got. It's a state-of-the-art broadcast facility." Judy needs something to chat about when she's delivering all that stuff.
- The community around the school, which we might also think of as the business community. If they're out there saying good things, we don't need to say anything.
- Opinion leaders in the community, who guide voters' actions.

Our job is to get these people in synch and speaking with one clear voice on the key subjects. They are the third-party advocates who build your reputation. I'll believe somebody I have confidence in who says this is a program that really pays off—even if I have no direct stake in it. By comparison, I can read the same thing in the local Bugle, or read 64 brochures, and it doesn't mean anything. ◘

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***Pat Jackson is one of the most widely known public relations consultants in North America. Senior counsel of Jackson, Jackson & Wagner in Exeter, New Hampshire, he is in his 46th year as a PR counselor for such clients as AT&T, Kodak and Los Alamos National Laboratories.***

# NEWS—NOT OLDS—GETS ATTENTION

## REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS ARE THE SEEDS OF A FRUITFUL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MEDIA.

**By Marty Lenzini Murray**

*"I want the donation of this equipment covered in the daily newspaper. I want it on the front page. And I want three TV crews here, too."*

*"Each contest winner needs to be listed in the newspaper with the name of the contest and the skill level. Remember, our most helpful board member's son took tenth place."*

Do those orders sound familiar? They may if you're a school public relations professional, a teacher in a school without a PR office, or an administrator who has voiced those kinds of demands.

We all want our best image showcased before as many people as possible. We want our students and programs to receive favorable recognition.

The tremendous advantage to news coverage, especially print, is its portability. We can clip articles and reproduce them for a "scrapbook" or portfolio we can use to impress people with the value of our programs. We also can include the printed articles with grant applications or present them at audits.

What we actually get in the media sometimes disappoints or angers our bosses, members of the school board or business advisory council, students, instructors and parents in the community. News coverage, or lack of it, depends on circumstances and rules. We can avoid setting ourselves up for disappointment when we understand them.

News organizations are businesses.

They are not interested in covering school events just for community relations. At the highest levels they are interested in making money. How many people tune in? How many people read the product? And, most important, how many people see the advertisements and frequent the businesses of the advertisers?

Only a very small percentage of all the news that happens on a particular day gets covered in the print or broadcast media. Education stories compete with murders, scandal, politics, sex and riots. In comparison, donations of equipment and names of contest winners seem tame.

What can we do to increase recognition of our programs and students?

### Recognize what is and isn't news

News isn't news if it's old. A news release about an event that happened two weeks ago is old.

Also, much of what we do and are proud of is part of our everyday work. We are expected to show up on time every day, manage resources and tax dollars wisely, provide exciting learning experiences for students and place students in jobs or send them on to the next step in their education.

News by definition is something outside the norm. Take the example of our donated equipment. How many people care? Certainly the company that donates the equipment, the program that receives it and the students who will use it. How many people might that be? Fifty? A hundred? To capture the attention of bombarded news organizations, a story needs to appeal to thousands—tens of thousands in large media markets. Or the story must have an interesting twist.

Vo-tech stories often don't appeal to the mass audience, so we need to look for the unusual. What about this donation is different? Is the equipment extraordinarily expensive? Is it one of only a few such pieces in the world? Was it given by a person or company not wealthy enough to really be able to afford such a donation? Does it send the school district's donation amounts over a certain mark, such as $1 million?

What about our list of student winners? Is one of the winners very young or old? Did twins or triplets win in related contests? Did someone overcome a disability to win? Did a grandparent and a grandchild win similar contests? Is one of the winners an outstanding athlete or contest winner in another area? Those are the angles you need to pitch to reporters.

## Remember the Basics

*Whether you're working on small or large stories, practice good media relations.*

- Call the reporter by name.
- Return calls within 15 minutes when you can.
- Drop everything to work on a breaking story.
- Give the reporter your home telephone number.
- Tell the truth.
- Don't say anything you don't want to see broadcast or printed—you can't be misquoted on something you didn't say.
- Do not go off the record (telling secrets you don't want broadcast).
- Answer a question the same way each time if it is asked over and over.
- Promise to call back by a certain time with other information.
- Refuse to answer "what if" situations; comment only on what is.
- Work with reporters on the good and the bad news stories.
- Don't ever ask to see a story before it's printed—that just doesn't happen.
- Never say "no comment." The public interprets that to mean you're hiding something.
- Avoid joking or comments that may be misinterpreted.
- Use plain English, not educational or business jargon.
- Send thank-you notes when you receive coverage. Do not thank for positive news, thank for accurate coverage, well-written text, strong visuals.
- If something is inaccurate, call the reporter to point out errors; follow up with a letter and ask for a correction if the errors are major.

And don't overlook weekly newspapers and trade publications. Weekly newspapers sometimes cover stories such as donated equipment and contest winners because they are more focused on the community or the vo-tech or business fields related to the contest or donation.

Trade and business publications can be interested in vocational-technical news when it relates to workers and the workplace. Your event may stand an even better chance of coverage if the businesses and associations that work with you notify those publications instead of, or in concert with, the school.

### News media aren't PR offices

When you absolutely must get the message out about your contest winners and the news media aren't responding, consider these options:

- Publish it in your own newsletter.
- Take out a paid print or broadcast ad (perhaps with business support).
- Make arrangements for people to be recognized before your board.
- Put the information up on a sign outside your school.
- Feature pictures of people you want to thank or honor on a school or community bulletin board or on your school's Web page, if you have one.
- Write an article for publication in another organization's newsletter.

Finding a way to manage the smaller stories frees you to work on the more complex education stories that may have more appeal for news organizations.

Reporters may not naturally seek out important, "big issue" education stories (that are not about misconduct or mismanagement) because they don't know where to find them. To get positive coverage, we need to build relationships with news reporters.

The education beat in medium and small daily newspapers often is used as a training ground for young reporters. That works to the disadvantage of educators in those markets because the reporters tend to be short-timers who have their eyes on the next and better beat (or paper). Large dailies tend to hire seasoned education reporters who are interested in writing substantial stories that explain complex issues. Most TV and radio stations don't have a reporter dedicated exclusively to education.

Whatever type of market or reporter you have, spend time getting to know that reporter. Be a friendly and helpful source of information so the reporter will naturally turn to you as a source. Keep in mind that each reporter has at least one editor who applies constant pressure to come up with stories.

News writers are trained to "follow the money." Be very familiar with the way your school or district manages money.

You also need some basic information at your fingertips. How many students do you serve? How old are they? What levels of education have they attained? What particular needs do they have? What languages do they speak? What happens to them after they leave you? How many get jobs? Doing what? How is their vocational education tied to their productivity after graduation?

Also be aware of your instructors—know their ages, their level of expertise and whether they've had industry-specific training. Remember that reporters want numbers so they can have an objective way to substantiate your school's claims.

"In my national consulting, I see media being more supportive of local schools," says Chuck Broadhead, president of The Communications Support Group in Ithaca, New York. He recommended that vocational-technical educators take advantage of this more favorable media climate.

In Florida, welfare reform, charter schools and education financing are media hot topics. Orange County papers and TV news stations have recently featured stories about former welfare recipients who have gotten off the rolls through technical education centers. Tie-ins to school-to-work and tech prep also have proven newsworthy.

Whatever approach seems to work in your area, avoid the trap of sending out too many press releases. Remember that most aren't even read—just tossed in the round file under the news clerk's desk. ■

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**How schools respond to emergencies can profoundly affect their image. Here are some keys to effective crisis management.**

# COPING WITH

In a small town in the Northeast, a pair of vocational students are charged with brutally murdering two men, apparently just for the thrill of it. A backhoe inadvertently bursts a pipeline in Oklahoma, loosing a hazardous vapor cloud that's headed directly toward a nearby vocational school.

At a community college in Colorado, a gun that was supposed to be loaded with blanks discharges a live round during cleaning practice. A police academy student takes a bullet to the head and dies instantly.

On a basketball court in Philadelphia, a vocational student who's just been assessed two technical fouls expresses his displeasure by slugging the referee, who promptly files assault charges.

Four real-life scenarios, one bottom line for the schools involved: Each is a full-fledged crisis—a volatile situation that must be handled skillfully, swiftly, with sensitivity to internal and external publics, and with keen appreciation of the needs, rights and power of the media. Call it what you will—crisis management, crisis communication or damage control—but how a school responds to a crisis can have a profound effect, for good or ill, on how the institution is perceived within the community and even beyond.

"Inappropriately handling a crisis can destroy every bit of credibility you've spent years building," warns Susan Hardy Brooks, director of marketing at Francis Tuttle Vocational-Technical Center in Oklahoma City and president of the National Association of Vocational-Technical Education Communicators. "If you're not prepared, if you don't handle the media well, if you don't communicate effectively in the community and internally, then you've struck out in the court of public opinion."

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**By Eric Ries, *Techniques* Contributing Editor**

# CRISIS

## Get with the plan

Crises come in as many varieties as there are ways for things to go wrong. Homicides, suicides, accidental deaths and injuries, tornados and other natural calamities, fires, hazardous materials spills, allegations of sexual or financial improprieties against school personnel, poison-pen bombshells in the "Letters to the Editor," school-to-careers critics venting on the 6 o'clock news. Crisis happens.

What, then, are the keys to managing these all-but-inevitable events—of minimizing their negative impact at worst and enhancing the school's reputation at best? *Techniques* questioned several school authorities in the field of crisis management and has culled from their responses these steps to successful damage control:

**DEVELOP A CRISIS PLAN.** This is a detailed account of who does what, in what order, when crisis hits. Such plans tap a core "crisis team" to coordinate key steps and typically designate a single spokesperson—usually the superintendent or marketing director—so that the school's message, as filtered through the news media, is clear and unfragmented.

At Tulsa Technology Center in Oklahoma, for example, each classroom is supplied with a flip chart that lists crisis procedures for a variety of scenarios; school personnel get copies to take home. "A lot of these [crises] happen after hours," notes Marketing Communications Director Jan Keim, "and you've got to have some kind of communication tree established so your employees know what to do and what's going on."

**PRACTICE THE PLAN.** It's not enough for schools to draft a crisis plan, gain board approval and sit and wait for a crisis to happen, crisis-management authorities say.

"So often a plan of this sort gets drafted and placed on a shelf, and that's the last it's seen. Then, when the crisis hits, nobody even remembers they got it," let alone what it says, notes Chuck Brodhead, a consultant whose Ithaca, New York-based company, The Communications Support Group, develops marketing plans for schools and nonprofit organizations.

It can be particularly instructive for schools to test emergency procedures with mock crises, the experts agree. Tulsa Tech, for instance, staged an armed-intruder scenario—complete with fake reporters and a school lockdown. "It was a very good learning experience for us because we really identified some holes," Keim recalls. "We have a child-care center at that campus, and we determined that you couldn't really hear the [emergency] announcement back in that area."

**KEEP STAFF AND STUDENTS INFORMED.** This not only helps defuse anxiety and tension during a crisis, authorities say, but lessens the potential for an outbreak of misinformation.

"One of the first things you need to do, even if the media's at your door, is to be upfront and quick with your students and staff and make sure they have the right information," says Rich Bagin, executive director of the Rockville, Maryland-based National School Public Relations Association. "Because [students and staff] will be asked [questions about the crisis situation] by the time they get home—by lots of other people, including the media, who may be across the street waiting to talk to folks."

**KEEP OPINION LEADERS IN THE LOOP.** Schools might even go so far as to keep a list of key community people handy and fax information directly to them when a crisis breaks. "That way you're sure they have the school's side of the story," Bagin notes.

One vocational school in Ponca City, Oklahoma, takes an even more aggressive stance. In an effort to quiet school-to-careers critics who sometimes grab headlines and issue harsh TV sound bites, Pioneer Technology Center's public information officer and school-to-work coordinator have undertaken a variety of efforts to win over the undecided and engage detractors in a nonconfrontational way. In addition to promoting school-to-careers one-on-one, in the media and before civic groups, the pair personally invite critics to attend school-to-careers meetings and share information with them. One parent who was a naysayer is now a member of Pioneer Tech's school-to-careers partnership, Project Partners.

"We've had a lot of success [winning people over]," reports the school's regional school-to-work coordinator, Linda Thompson. "It just takes time."

**REMEMBER THE VICTIMS.** Schools must never sacrifice compassion and caring in the rush to secure the premises, inform the appropriate emergency agencies and alert the media, crisis-management experts emphasize. Throughout any crisis response, concern for victims must be paramount.

"How do you tell a parent, for instance, that his or her child has been critically injured?" Brodhead asks. "Do you do it on the telephone? Do you go to the house? It should be thought through. How you handle those situations is a key indicator of how 'human' an organization you are. Which can be critical to the image people have of you."

"The Valdez oil spill is always used in our crisis-training sessions," Keim says. In that case, she points out, Exxon's perceived "non-concern for victims, non-concern for the environment, non-concern for anything" created a second disaster—a public-relations nightmare for the oil giant.

**KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH THE MEDIA.** "In today's world the media is at your door before you even have a chance to breathe," Bagin observes. But asphyxiation isn't inevitable. Schools that heed the steps outlined in the following section of this article can substitute aspiration for perspiration, and in some cases even earn new respect.

# The Truth Rules, Carville Says

"I happen to believe the old saw [that] three things are acceptable" in crisis response, says political strategist James Carville. "The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth."

To Carville, architect of Bill Clinton's successful presidential campaign in 1992, honesty is key to successful crisis communication in any field—be it politics, business or education. Echoing many of the points enumerated by crisis managers in vocational education, he advises schools to view the news media not as an implacable adversary but as a potential ally in communicating facts and the school's message.

**The first thing I'd say is that the first impression is very often the last impression. The initial thing you get out [to the media] is critical."**

—James Carville,
political strategist

Carville's interest in education isn't merely academic. He formerly taught science at a Louisiana middle school, his mother was a teacher and two of his sisters still are. Nor is he a stranger to the American Vocational Association. He and his wife, political consultant Mary Matalin, will keynote AVA's National Policy Seminar next March.

"The first thing I'd say," Carville offers, "is that the first impression is very often the last impression. The initial thing you get out [to the media] is critical. It's hard to downplay the importance of the initial skirmish, if you will." If possible, he says, the school spokesperson should be well-rested when he or she meets the press.

"Suppose you have a teacher who's accused of having sexual relations with children—sort of the *hypothet du jour*," Carville says—referring to several such incidents in the Washington, DC, area in recent months. "You need to go into [the press conference] with a clear mind. You can have trouble when you're tired. There are very few times when you can't go get four or five hours of sleep in the middle of anything."

He concedes, however, that some crises beg immediate response. When there's no time for school officials to catch a few Zs or even take a deep breath, the best things to do, Carville says, are to engage the media quickly and try to be as accurate and open as possible.

"You've got to say what happened and give people the best information you can," he advises. Meeting inquiries with a terse "No comment" "catches up with you," he warns, and denying that anything happened is not only dishonest but pointless. "The bigger the crisis, the more likely the truth comes out [anyway]," Carville notes.

Preparation can ease anxieties and strengthen schools' ability to handle fast-breaking crises, he says. Mock media interviews are "helpful," crisis plans outline "a protocol for decision making," and schools can learn much by sharing stories and strategies, Carville advises.

Finally, he says, schools must always stress their concern for anyone endangered and/or victimized in the crisis.

"When you're dealing with large public institutions, there's sort of a presumption of detachment—the cold-hearted bureaucrat thing," Carville notes. "You want to [convey] that you're not [that way]—that you're responsible for these children, that there's genuine concern and even sometimes an angst over what happened."

## Meeting the press

"I think a lot of times [schools] try to use the media as a recognition arm for our staff, employees and students, when in fact that isn't the media's role," Brooks observes.

Patsy Krechel, director of public information for the Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System, is less diplomatic.

"So many people think the media owes them," she says. "Well, that's not how it works and that's not how [the media] perceive it, so sometimes I just want to tell people to get over it."

How it works, crisis-management authorities stress, is that crisis is news and it's the media's job to report news. If schools want the facts to be accurate and their message to reach the public, it behooves them to cooperate with the media. And if schools follow some basic ground rules, the experts say, they can retain considerable control over the situation and even strengthen their standing with the press.

**NEVER SAY "NO COMMENT."** "Eighty percent of the general public says that when an official or a corporation or an organization like a school says 'No comment,' that means something's wrong and they're guilty," Bagin says. Always say *something* to the media, the experts advise, even if it's just that you don't have any information yet but will tell reporters when you do.

**SPEAK CLEARLY.** Don't bog reporters down in educational jargon. Instead of saying, "Our campus director and ESL instructor are investigating that," say "Our principal and our instructor of English as a second language are investigating that."

**NEVER ANSWER HYPOTHETICAL QUESTIONS OR SPECULATE.** A school spokesperson might politely respond to such queries by saying, "I really can't speculate. Let's stick to what we know."

**GET TO THE POINT.** Give a succinct answer and then stop talking. As Tulsa Tech's communication plan states, "Dead air isn't your problem." Knowing when to shut up is good protection against foot-in-mouth disease.

**DON'T EVER DENY THAT SOMETHING HAPPENED.** The media have police scanners and plenty of other ways to get information. Schools that smugly think "they'll never know" are invariably wrong, and their credibility with the media is shot when they're found out.

**BE OPEN AND HONEST.** Schools must be truthful with reporters. But "you don't have to offer them everything you know," Krechel adds. Schools can justifiably decline to release facts for legal or privacy reasons, for example.

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**BE QUICK.** Reporters are on deadline and appreciate swift response. Krechel tells the story of a grateful reporter who later took the time to research and write a "wonderful" article on a community college's occupational program.

**BE COURTEOUS.** The school spokesperson should try to remain calm and pleasant, even if the reporter is hostile.

**PRACTICE.** Just as schools should conduct institution-wide drills to test their crisis-response procedures, all potential spokespeople for the school should be trained in dealing with the media. At Tulsa Tech, for example, upper management are interviewed on camera by staff posing as reporters.

## Four stories

The four scenarios that opened this article illustrate all the points stressed by crisis-management authorities: the need for planning and the rewards and dangers of various types of response.

Tulsa Tech had no crisis plan when the vapor cloud of anhydrous ammonia threatened the school three years ago. School safety coordinator David Laurence acted quickly and wisely, contacting fire and health officials and keeping staff and students indoors. But it was luck—a simple shift in the wind—that saved ill-prepared school officials from a possible media circus should a full-blown health crisis have ensued.

"That was the impetus for our crisis-response plan," Laurence says. "Now we know who to communicate with—in the administration, the press, all those people." When the school was later confronted with a hazardous-chemical crisis caused by illegally dumped cyanide, the necessary safety and communication procedures were in place, the school was perceived as being in charge and the incident quickly faded from public consciousness.

In Philadelphia—where national media, including the cable sports network ESPN, seized on the punching incident as further evidence of the incivility of today's athletes—the vocational school where the basketball player attended classes deferred media inquiries to the Philadelphia Public Schools' information office.

"Our schools are encouraged to respond individually, but in this case people knew from the get-go that this was a serious incident that was going to get a lot of publicity," recalls Barbara Farley, the school system's director of public information.

In interviews with the media, school officials steered clear of any discussion of the criminal charges, but noted that the student was subject to disciplinary action at his school for striking a *de facto* school official (in this case the referee). The school system shared little else with reporters initially, citing the student's right to privacy during the disciplinary process. Soon afterward, however, the school system announced that the student had been transferred to a special school for youth with discipline problems and that he would never again be allowed to play basketball in the Philadelphia Public Schools. The vocational school came across as acting quickly and responsibly.

When the police academy student was accidentally shot and killed at Aurora Community College in Colorado, "Our first response [to the media] was to get out immediately the school's sympathy to the family, our extreme shock at what had happened and our willingness to look into what had happened ourselves, apart from the police investigation," says Communications Director Chris Henning. The message broadcast to the community was exactly what the school hoped to convey—"that we were very concerned and that we wanted to get to the bottom of it."

In the case of the murders in the Northeast, however, a school with a positive story to tell chose not to tell it, with detrimental results.

School officials, certain that a biased media would simply turn the tragedy into an indictment of vocational education, shunned reporters. "We weren't about to hold a press conference," the school's defiant principal told *Techniques*.

But that meant the general public never learned that the school provided counseling to every last student who needed it. The school's cold shoulder also left a bad taste with reporters frantically working against deadline—some of whom told *Techniques* they'd been warmly received when covering "positive" stories like the school's development of a Web site.

Reporters at two different newspapers said the school's treatment of them might well color their future interest in pursuing such positive stories.

"If they're not going to help us in the bad times, why should we help them during good times?" one scribe asked.

Brodhead fully understands where school officials are coming from in their distaste for crisis communication—particularly in a case as appalling as the senseless murders in the Northeast.

"They're not comfortable situations for any school," he concedes. "But when crisis strikes, it's a reality, it's upon you."

The bottom line in all crisis response, Brodhead sums up, is this: "When you've got bad news, get it out, get it all out, get it out now and get it over with." ◼

### Need Help?

A variety of resources are available to help schools manage crises, deal effectively with the media and convey positive messages.

One such aid is *The Complete Crisis Communication Management Guide for Schools*, which dissects a variety of crisis scenarios and includes a step-by-step outline of what to do in the first 30 minutes of a crisis; do's and don'ts in dealing with the media; checklists for principals, teachers and custodians on handling hazards and emergency supplies; and materials on organizing crisis-planning workshops for school staff. Available in both paper and computer disk forms, this manual by the National School Public Relations Association can be customized to individual schools' use. "It's an excellent resource for somebody who's starting from scratch," says Susan Hardy Brooks, president of the National Association of Vocational-Technical Education Communicators.

*The Complete Crisis Communication Management Guide for Schools* and the following pertinent titles are available through American Vocational Association product sales: *Making the Case for School-to-Careers Education, Mediatalk: Maximize Your Performance with the Media, Practical PR for Principals* and *Effective Public Relations: Everybody's Job*. Call (800) 826-9972 for price and ordering information.

In addition to products, NSPRA offers workshops on crisis-related subjects, a fax news service and other resources. For more information, call (301) 519-0496.

Schools also can tap marketing and communications consultants for help in crisis planning. Many such firms work with educational institutions and have experience designing crisis plans tailored specifically to schools' needs. Beyond following up on word-of-mouth referrals and checking the local phone book, schools can contact the Public Relations Society of America at (212) 995-2230 or <http://www.prsa.org> for guidance.

Crisis-management experts further stress that there's nothing wrong with plagiarizing from plans that work. Other school districts, local fire departments, hospitals, and industry partners "would probably be happy" to share their crisis plans with any school that asked, Brooks notes.

"Key elements of good crisis plans are applicable across the board and can provide good insurance for you," she advises.

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# What Do People Think of Us?

## A *Techniques* survey of parents finds strong support for vocational-technical education—but confirms that some myths persist.

*Ask a vocational educator to name the most serious issues facing the field today, and most will rank "our image problem" high on the list. For years vocational-technical educators have been saying they're tired of feeling like their program is the poor stepchild of the school system—dissed by the counselors, stiffed by the school board. They tire of the false stereotypes sometimes used to depict their students: Kids who can't cut it academically. The non-college bound. Misfits.*

*When yet another popular comic strip lampoons vocational education—first Far Side and, more recently, Dilbert—as a refuge for losers and scam artists, it's easy to see why vocational educators feel picked on. Anecdotes abound.*

*Quantifying the so-called image problem is more difficult. Just how, exactly, does the public view vocational and career education in general?* Techniques *wasn't able to find the answer in the education literature. There appear to have been no national surveys on this subject in at least a decade, and likely longer.*

*A search of the ERIC database turned up a few state surveys from the late 1980s that showed ambivalence toward vocational education. People who had direct contact with programs rated them higher then those who had not. A 1994 Gallup/Phi Delta Kappan survey on attitudes toward public school found that three-quarters of Americans favor requiring vocational education—for students* not going to college. *That's been the most persistent stereotype.*

*Since there wasn't much to go on,* Techniques *decided to test the waters with a mini survey of parents across the country. We chose to do a small, but national, phone survey of parents of high-school-age children.*

*The* Techniques *staff designed the survey with the guidance of Lewis & Clark Research, an independent firm in Raleigh, North Carolina. The researchers spent about 15 minutes with each of 50 parents selected for geographic representation (from a list of 500 names purchased from a database company).*

*Fifty people aren't enough to create a scientific sample. Nonetheless, their answers provide an interesting glimpse into the public's perception of career-focused education. And the responses may encourage a more comprehensive survey to come.*

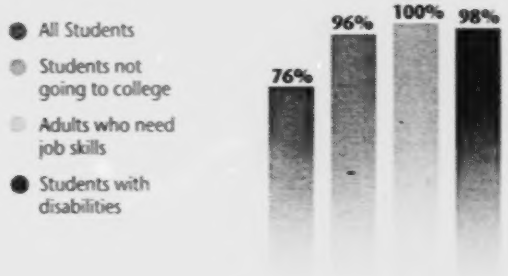
*Although our survey was not designed to solicit opinions about specific occupation areas of vocational education, respondents clearly acknowledged that vocational education's greatest strength was its emphasis on teaching job skills. More than half said the words "vocational education" brought to mind technical/job skills or preparation for the trades. And while half said vocational education was more appropriate for students who weren't going to college, half disagreed.*

*Here are the survey highlights.*

### General Views

Respondents in general associate vocational education with high school and community college programs focused on providing job and technical training. Many respondents said "all students" and "anybody" would benefit from vocational education. Others feel it is best suited to those seeking an alternative to college, or for low achievers such as "children with problems like ADD" (attention deficit disorder).

***Which of these groups do you think would benefit from vocational education?***

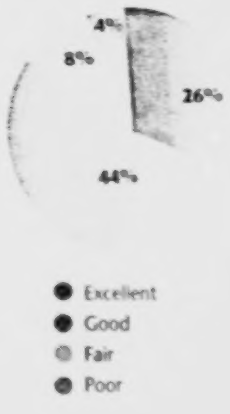


### Firsthand Experience

Eight respondents (16 percent) said their children either had been or were enrolled in a vocational education program, and a majority viewed that program favorably. Of respondents whose children have not been involved in voc ed, most (88 percent) said they would consider it as an option, and 31 percent said they knew relatives, friends or neighbors in vocational education.

### Views on Local Programs

Here's how respondents rated vocational education in their communities:



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## Exploding the Myths

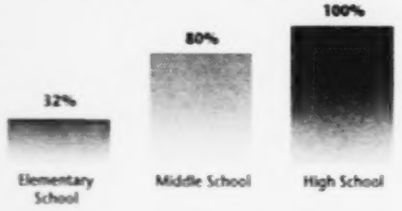
Respondents were asked to react to each of these statements:

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vocational education prepares students for challenging careers. | 30% | 68% | 0% | 2% |
| Vocational education prepares students for jobs that pay well | 18% | 72% | 10% | 0% |
| Vocational education leads to low-skill jobs. | 0% | 4% | 74% | 22% |
| Vocational education can lead students to go to college. | 14% | 78% | 8% | 0% |
| Vocational education is mostly for high school kids who don't plan to go to college. | 2% | 48% | 44% | 6% |

## Careers and School

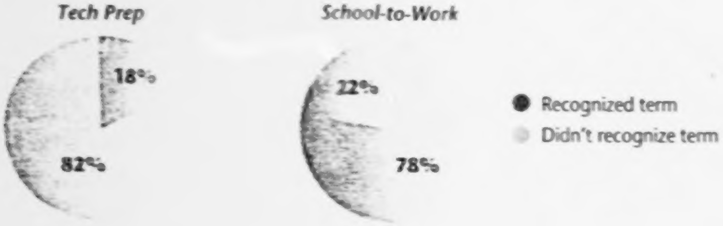
Most respondents feel very positive about career exploration in schools. Almost all (98%) believe it is appropriate for high schools to offer juniors and seniors a chance to do internships or apprenticeships in different career fields. And 90 percent say it's a good idea for schools to use real work-based problems or career-related projects to teach subjects like math and English.

*It is appropriate for teachers to begin discussing careers with students in:*



## Tech Prep and School-to-Work

No respondents could correctly define tech prep or school-to-work concepts even though both terms have been heavily promoted in the 1990s. Only 18 percent said they had heard of tech prep, but they had no clear idea of what it was. On the other hand, four-fifths of respondents said they'd heard of school-to-work—but thought it was cooperative education rather than a reform model for all high schools.

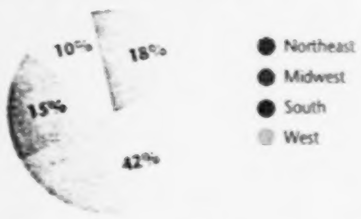

*Tech Prep*

*School-to-Work*

## About the Respondents

Most of the parents in our survey group (84%) are between 36 and 55, have two or three children (77%), mostly between the ages of 13 and 25, and have had at least some college education (74%) and represented a variety of household income levels (most between $25,000 and $75,000). Thirty-six percent are male and 64 percent are female.

*Geographic Representation:*



## SELECTED COMMENTS

### On the quality of voc ed:

*I have seen so many success stories.*

*I have seen kids labeled as failures who had talents that they learned to use well.*

*The input from teachers and students is that they are successful in getting employment.*

*It has improved tremendously over the last few years.*

### On what "vocational education" brought to mind:

*A good thing; we need more of it (2 mentions).*

*A way to find a job if you're not going to college (5 mentions).*

*Trades, technical training or job skills (28 mentions).*

*College-level programs (6 mentions).*

*Alternative schools (2 mentions).*

### On enrolling their children in voc ed:

*A vocational education program teaches them more than college.*

*They could get a better job, not just a college degree.*

*I have a son who would benefit from hands-on training.*

*It's an opportunity to get experience in a field.*

*If I had it to do over, it would have been better for me.*

■ For more information about the survey, call *Techniques* at (800) 826-9972 or e-mail avahq@avaonline.org.

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Get Your Promotional Efforts Moving with

# Get Your Career in Gear!

## MATERIALS

Plan Now for
These Two 1998
Celebrations:

Vocational Education Week,
February 8-14
School-To-Careers Month
all of March

Reach out to:

- Students • Parents
- Business Leaders
- Other Educators
- Community Supporters
- Policy-Makers

Here's the help you need to launch attention-getting events or an entire promotional campaign to sell school-to-careers initiatives and vocational-technical education in your community! Information brochures... banners... posters... balloons... T-shirts... painter's caps...mugs... and all kinds of appealing giveaway items and recognition gifts with the catchy **"Get Your Career in Gear!"** logo.

**American Vocational Association**

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# Gear Up for Voc Ed Week and School-to-Careers Month with these Great Giveaways!

## Get Out There!

Place giveaway items in prominent community locations and include them with letters and school communications. Broadcast your message in:

- ★ Retail and grocery stores
- ★ Libraries
- ★ Restaurants
- ★ Community centers
- ★ School corridors

## Two attention-grabbing logo styles!

**We've introduced a snappy new logo this year. And on some promotional items you have a choice of the new logo or last year's popular MTV-style design. Check product descriptions for options. Either style's a winner!**

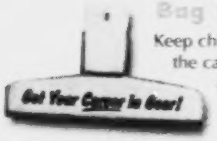
Get Your Career in Gear!

### Get Started with the Promotional Kit!

This one-stop shopping site for getting your promotional efforts off the ground comes complete with tested school promotional ideas you can use and step-by-step guidance in planning promotional campaigns and gaining media coverage. Materials include a common-sense guide that shows you how to put a plan together; samples of all of AVA's promotional brochures; samples of several Get Your Career in Gear! logo products; proclamations, public service announcements and sample campaign ads; and reproducible logo artwork.

| **Quantity** | **1** | **5** |
|---|---|---|
| Member | $25 | $110 |
| Non-Member | $30 | $140 |
| Prod# | VWPRKIT | VWPRKIX |
| Unit Comparison* | $25 | $22 |

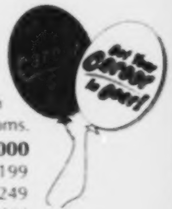
**The unit comparison* designation allows the purchaser to compare the unit price of the quantities offered at the member's price. Please order by quantities shown.**



### Bag Clips

Keep chips and snacks fresh while spreading the career-education message with these 4-inch-wide white clips.

| **Quantity** | **10** | **50** | **100** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $9 | $39 | $67 |
| Non-Member | $11 | $42 | $75 |
| Prod# | VWCLIPX | VWCLI50 | VWCLIPC |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.90 | $0.78 | $0.67 |


Career
Get Your Career In Gear!

### Balloons

Your message will fly high with these colorful, nine-inch balloons, which come in green and in white — 50 of each per 100. Spice up your displays, school halls and classrooms.

| **Quantity** | **100** | **500** | **1000** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $29 | $125 | $199 |
| Non-Member | $34 | $149 | $249 |
| Prod# | VWBALLC | VWBALLD | VWBALLM |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.29 | $0.25 | $0.20 |

Get Your Career In Gear!

### Ballpoint Pens

Looking for the "write" giveaway — one that's a useful and attractive addition to any gift pack? These white pens with yellow logo really get your point across.

| **Quantity** | **25** | **100** |
|---|---|---|
| Member | $11 | $35 |
| Non-Member | $15 | $42 |
| Prod# | VWBPENS | VWBPENC |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.44 | $0.35 |

Get Your Career In Gear!
Vocational Education Week

Get Your Career In Gear!™

### Banners

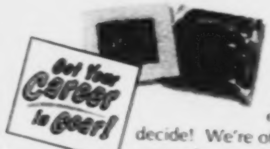
This 4-feet-by-4-feet item makes a dramatic statement for your programs, stretched above a busy street or prominently displayed at a big promotional event. Colorful new yellow logo on both sides, plus one side promotes Vocational Education Week and the other School-to-Careers Month. Banner comes with four grommets for easy mounting. Also available: One-sided banner with MTV-style logo only.

| | **Two-Sided Banner** | | **One-Sided Banner** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Quantity** | **1** | **5** | **1** | **5** |
| Member | $54 | $200 | $29 | $135 |
| Non-Member | $60 | $250 | $35 | $159 |
| Prod# | VWBANNR | VWBANN5 | VWBA971 | VWBA975 |
| Unit Comparison* | $54 | $40 | $29 | $27 |

## Buttons

Pin these appealing 1 3/4-inch round buttons — each with a safety catch — onto mall show attendees, open house guests and current or prospective students, and suddenly your school-to- careers message has "legs"!

| Quantity | 50 | 250 | 1000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $22 | $100 | $300 |
| Non-Member | $25 | $115 | $325 |
| Prod# | VWBUT50 | VWBUTTZ | VWBUTTM |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.44 | $0.40 | $0.30 |



## Candy Packages

Give supporters a gift that's red-hot or offer them something to chew on — you decide! We're offering two different packages — gummy bears (with new yellow logo) and red hots (with black and white MTV-style logo) — each in see-through packages with the logo on the reverse side.

| | Gummy Bears | | Red Hots | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Quantity | 100 | 500 | 100 | 500 |
| Member | $75 | $325 | $35 | $125 |
| Non-Member | $85 | $350 | $40 | $140 |
| Prod# | VWGUMYC | VWGUMYD | VWCANDY | VWCANDD |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.75 | $0.65 | $0.35 | $0.25 |

Commendation

## Certificates

These attractive commendations, sized to fit a standard frame at 8 inches by 10 inches, are ideal for recognizing school-to-careers supporters and encouraging their continued interest and help.

| Quantity | 10 | 50 |
|---|---|---|
| Member | $9 | $25 |
| Non-Member | $12 | $30 |
| Prod# | VWCER10 | VWCERTL |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.90 | $0.50 |

## Key Chains

Recipients will hit the road with a constant reminder of career education when they put their car keys on one of these durable plastic giveaway items. Order enough for all your special events.

| Quantity | 25 | 100 | 500 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $22 | $80 | $350 |
| Non-Member | $27 | $84 | $400 |
| Prod# | VWKEY25 | VWKEYSC | VWKEYSD |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.88 | $0.80 | $0.70 |

## License Plate Holders

Promote career education on the highways and byways! You'll get plenty of mileage out of this white plastic frame with a yellow imprint.

| Quantity | 1 | 10 | 25 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $4 | $35 | $75 |
| Non-Member | $5 | $40 | $80 |
| Prod# | VWLCPLT | VWLCP10 | VWLCP25 |
| Unit Comparison* | $4 | $3.50 | $3 |

## Magnets

Here's an inexpensive use of the Get Your Career in Gear! message that will stick with everyone who takes one. Buy a bunch of these standouts and spread the magnetic appeal of school-to-careers! Available only in black and white MTV-style logo.

| Quantity | 10 | 50 | 100 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $5 | $19 | $35 |
| Non-Member | $7 | $25 | $42 |
| Prod# | VWMAGNT | VWMAG50 | VWMAGNC |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.50 | $0.38 | $0.35 |

## Mouse Pads

Here's an especially practical giveaway for your supporters and anyone with a mouse on their desktop. Each of the green pads measures 8 1/2 x 9 3/4 inches.

| Quantity | 1 | 10 | 25 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $5 | $42 | $95 |
| Non-Member | $6 | $50 | $105 |
| Prod# | VWMOUSE | VWMOUSX | VWMOU25 |
| Unit Comparison* | $5 | $4.20 | $3.80 |

## Mugs

Recipients of these 11-ounce white, ceramic mugs will be reminded of your programs even as they sip their morning coffee or tea. They're great gifts for parents, employers and faculty members.

| Quantity | 1 | 10-19 | 20+ | Box of 36 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $5 | $4.50 | $3.75 | $125 |
| Non-Member | $6 | $5 | $4 | $135 |
| Prod# | VWMUG98 | VWMUG98 | VWMUG98 | VWMUG36 |
| Unit Comparison* | $5 | $4.50 | $3.75 | $3.47 |

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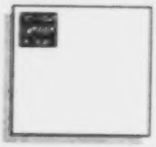
# Get Your Career in Gear!



## Name Tags

Not only will these nifty peel-off badges identify guests, volunteers and supporters at your high-impact events, they'll identify everyone with career education. And they fit easily into plastic badge holders. Available only in the black and white MTV-style logo.

| **Quantity** | **100** | **500** | **1000** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $9 | $35 | $49 |
| Non-Member | $11 | $54 | $65 |
| Prod# | VWNMTAG | VWNMTAD | VWNMTAM |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.09 | $0.07 | $0.05 |

## Napkins

Get your food events in gear with these attractive 4 3/4 inch-square items. Order enough for all your social occasions. Available only in the MTV-style logo in red.

| **Quantity** | **100** | **500** | **1000** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $9 | $39 | $69 |
| Non-Member | $10 | $44 | $76 |
| Prod# | VWNAPKC | VWNAPKD | VWNAPKM |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.09 | $0.078 | $0.069 |

## Place Mats

Give diners food for thought at your next awards banquet or legislative breakfast, in the school cafeteria and at local fast-food restaurants during Vocational Education Week and School-to-Careers Month. Each of these 10-inch-by-14-inch mats conveys facts about school-to-careers and vocational-technical education. Available only with black and white MTV-style logo.

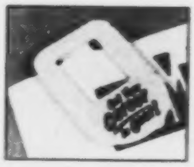
| **Quantity** | **100** | **500** | **1000** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $25 | $80 | $125 |
| Non-Member | $29 | $115 | $175 |
| Prod# | VWPMATS | VWPMATD | VWPMATM |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.25 | $0.16 | $0.12 |

## Special Event Pak

There's a feast of handy promotional items in each package — a place mat, napkin and name tag. And each item is accented with the eye-catching MTV-style logo.

| **Quantity** | **100** | **500** | **1000** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $40 | $145 | $200 |
| Non-Member | $55 | $160 | $225 |
| Prod# | VWDINNR | VWDINND | VWDINNM |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.40 | $0.29 | $0.20 |

**The unit comparison* designation allows the purchaser to compare the unit price of the quantities offered at the member's price. Please order by quantities shown.**



## Paper Clip Strips

You can keep it all together with these white plastic clips, ideal for marking your place in a book or clipping together notes and papers. They come in strips of five, 20 strips to a package.

| **Quantity** | **20** | **50** | **100** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $8 | $18 | $32 |
| Non-Member | $11 | $20 | $40 |
| Prod# | VWSTRIP | VWSTRIL | VWSTRIC |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.40 | $0.36 | $0.32 |

## Pencils

In white with the slogan in yellow, these sharp writing implements are sure to stand out on any desk.

| **Quantity** | **50** | **250** | **500** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $22 | $90 | $150 |
| Non-Member | $25 | $105 | $175 |
| Prod# | VWPEN50 | VWPENCZ | VWPENCD |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.44 | $0.36 | $0.30 |

## Notebook Rulers

Something's afoot with these nifty white plastic rulers with yellow logo, designed to fit easily into any three-ring binder! Features metric measurements as well.

| **Quantity** | **100** | **500** |
|---|---|---|
| Member | $60 | $275 |
| Non-Member | $70 | $300 |
| Prod# | VWRULER | VWRULED |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.60 | $0.55 |

## Plastic Bags

These 10-by-12-inch white bags are great carry-alls for brochures and other materials you distribute at high-impact events. And they double as litter bags. You'll find any number of uses for them. Available only with the black and white MTV-style logo.

| **Quantity** | **100** | **500** | **1000** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $29 | $129 | $199 |
| Non-Member | $35 | $149 | $229 |
| Prod# | VWLITTC | VWLITTD | VWLITTM |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.29 | $0.258 | $0.199 |

## Painter's Caps

Brush up on a fun teen fashion and advertise career education at the same time with these white, rayon-polyester caps. One size fits all. Yellow logo on front.

| **Quantity** | **10** | **25** |
|---|---|---|
| Member | $25 | $50 |
| Non-Member | $28 | $65 |
| Prod# | VWPCAPX | VWPCA25 |
| Unit Comparison* | $2.50 | $2.00 |

## Post-it Notes

Take note: These popular 50-sheet pads are just the ticket to ensure that the whole office gets the school-to-careers message. Available only with MTV-style logo in black and white.

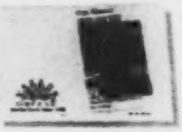
| **Quantity** | **10** | **240** |
|---|---|---|
| Member | $10 | $170 |
| Non-Member | $12 | $185 |
| Prod# | VWPPADS | VWPPADY |
| Unit Comparison* | $1 | $0.71 |

## Posters

Make a positive impression with this set of two stylish posters that use bold colors and sharp, eye-catching graphics to drive the school-to-careers message home to students. Each poster is 17 inches by 22 inches, with space provided for local contact information. Each set contains equal numbers of the two posters. Make sure you have plenty on hand to display throughout your school and community.

| **Quantity** | **Set of 20** | **Set of 100** | **Set of 200** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $40 | $150 | $200 |
| Non-Member | $55 | $199 | $249 |
| Prod# | VWPOS20 | VWPOSTC | VWPOSCC |
| Unit Comparison* | $2 | $1.50 | $1 |

## Seed Packages



Here's a stunning reminder that career-preparation programs help students grow into something beautiful. These seeds grow into a variety of pretty flowers for cut flower bouquets. MTV-style red logo on the package.

| **Quantity** | **100** | **500** | **1000** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $25 | $100 | $175 |
| Non-Member | $34 | $150 | $219 |
| Prod# | VWSEEDS | VWSEEDD | VWSEEDM |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.25 | $0.20 | $0.175 |

## Stationery Labels

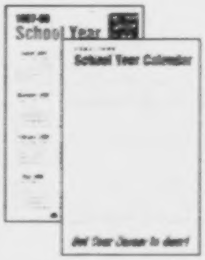
Accent all of your correspondence with a plug for career education. These 1-inch-square self-adhesive labels come in rolls of 500 with the new yellow logo.

| **Quantity** | **500** | **2500** | **5000** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $20 | $80 | $115 |
| Non-Member | $24 | $100 | $150 |
| Prod# | VWSTICK | VWSTICY | VWSTICA |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.04 | $0.032 | $0.023 |

## Sipper Bottles

Sipper bottles are "in," and students are thirsting for them. These white plastic 32-ounce bottles with straws are perfect door prizes or gifts — and they constantly remind students about the importance of career exploration.
With new yellow logo.

| **Quantity** | **1** | **10** | **25** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $3 | $25 | $59 |
| Non-Member | $4 | $30 | $69 |
| Prod# | VWBOTTL | VWBOTTX | VWBOT25 |
| Unit Comparison* | $3 | $2.50 | $2.36 |



## School Year Calendars

Get your career-education message in front of prospective students and other key audiences every day of the school year with this inexpensive calendar with new yellow logo. It runs from August 1998 through July 1999. Also still available are calendars running from August 1997 through July 1998. Specify time period.

| | | **1998-99** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Quantity** | **100** | **500** | **1000** |
| Member | $25 | $99 | $165 |
| Non-Member | $29 | $115 | $185 |
| Prod# | VWCALEN | VWCALED | VWCALEM |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.25 | $0.198 | $0.165 |

| | | **1997-98** |
|---|---|---|
| **Quantity** | **100** | **500** |
| Member | $20 | $80 |
| Non-Member | $25 | $90 |
| Prod# | VWCA97C | VWCA97D |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.20 | $0.16 |

## Sunglasses

The eyes have it — a cool and handy promotional item for career education, that is. These neat shades are black nylon with neon color arms and the new Get Your Career in Gear! logo imprinted on both temple pieces.

| **Quantity** | **1** | **10** | **25** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $2.50 | $20 | $45 |
| Non-Member | $4 | $35 | $75 |
| Prod# | VWSGLAS | VWSGLAX | VWSGL25 |
| Unit Comparision* | $2.50 | $2.00 | $1.80 |

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# Get Your Career in Gear!

### T-Shirts

Guaranteed to draw attention and spark questions about your programs, these black, 100 percent cotton T-shirts feature logos on both the back and front. Put them on all your mall show or career fair volunteers and buy extras as gifts for special supporters. Specify size (large or extra large) when ordering.

| **Quantity** | **1** | **10** | **25** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $9 | $80 | $187 |
| Non-Member | $11 | $99 | $225 |
| Prod# | VWTSHRT | VWTSH10 | VWTSH25 |
| Unit Comparison* | $9 | $8 | $7.48 |

### Tote Bags

This good-looking, sturdy item carries the message and a whole lot more! Your special supporters, faculty members and others you want to recognize can put books and many other items in this generous 16 inch by 14 inch natural duck bag with 26-inch handles.

| **Quantity** | **1** | **10** | **25** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $8.95 | $80 | $175 |
| Non-Member | $10.95 | $90 | $190 |
| Prod# | VWCBAGS | VWCBAGX | VWBAG25 |
| Unit Comparison* | $8.95 | $8 | $7 |

### Visors

These attractive, fun red visors are perfect for distribution at mall shows, career fairs, open houses. Available only in the MTV style logo.

| **Quantity** | **10** | **50** | **100** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $15 | $60 | $90 |
| Non-Member | $23 | $89 | $119 |
| Prod# | VWVISOX | VWVISOL | VWVISOC |
| Unit Comparision* | $1.50 | $1.20 | $.90 |

**The unit comparison* designation allows the purchaser to compare the unit price of the quantities offered at the member's price. Please order by quantities shown.**

### Teacher's Survival Kit

**Give this "life saver" kit to your favorite teachers! We've filled one theme duck tote bag with these terrific items:**

- **sipper bottle**
- **visor**
- **Post-It pad**
- **one gummy bear candy package**
- **one red hot candy package**
- **pencils (two)**
- **seed packages (two)**
- **ballpoint pen**
- **button**
- **paper clip strip**
- **litter bag**

| **Quantity** | **1** | **5** |
|---|---|---|
| Member | $22 | $95 |
| Non-Member | $25 | $105 |
| Prod# | VWTSKIT | VWTSKIV |
| Unit Comparison* | $22 | $19 |

### Display Pak

Here's everything you need to put together a great presentation for parents' nights, open houses, mall shows and other events. Each pak has:

- one double-sided banner
- 20 poster sets
- 100 balloons
- 50 calendars
- 10 T-shirts
- 100 buttons

| **Quantity** | **1** | **5** |
|---|---|---|
| Member | $210 | $800 |
| Non-Member | $240 | $850 |
| Prod# | VWDSPLY | VWDSPL5 |
| Unit Comparison* | $210 | $160 |

# Promotional/Recruitment Brochures

## Get the Word Out!

Use AVA's informational brochures to share the exciting things that are going on in school-to-careers and vocational-technical education. Feature these great resources at parents' nights, in mailings to prospective students, at civic club meetings, in course-enrollment packets, at open houses or mall show giveaways, and in media packets and brochures.

## FOR STUDENTS

### Get Your Career in Gear!

Explaining school-to-careers to students is a snap with this cool-looking, straight-talking brochure that tells students exactly what school-to-careers education means to them. Designed to complement AVA's video of the same name, it spells out the many benefits of school-to-careers — from making academic subjects relevant to students' lives to giving them work experience and a leg up on college or other life directions. Order enough to launch a school or system campaign.

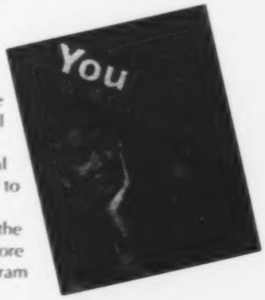
| **Quantity** | **100** | **500** | **1000** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $39 | $156 | $250 |
| Non-Member | $47 | $188 | $275 |
| Prod# | VWGYCGC | VWGYCGD | VWGYCGM |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.39 | $0.31 | $0.25 |

### Life After High School

Wish you had a brochure for prospective students and their parents that says vocational education and college do go together? This beautiful, four-color edition is it! The brochure has been updated to include new real-life stories from people who discovered their strengths and interests through vocational-technical education and went on to earn college degrees and build successful careers.

| **Quantity** | **100** | **500** | **1000** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $89 | $359 | $490 |
| Non-Member | $109 | $439 | $590 |
| Prod# | VWLIFEC | VWLIFED | VWLIFEM |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.89 | $0.72 | $0.49 |

### You Can Be What You Want To Be



This attractive tabloid for use with middle school and early high school students still includes AVA's popular "career quizzes" — covering all major vocational-technical education fields — but has been updated to reflect career trends for the 21st century. This is a great recruitment tool, with just the kind of information students need to explore their career options, determine their program of studies in high school and make good choices about their future. Featuring dynamic full-color photos, exciting graphics and compelling text, it's sure to be a winner with students.

| **Quantity** | **100** | **500** | **1000** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $50 | $200 | $275 |
| Non-Member | $60 | $240 | $300 |
| Prod# | VWUCAN1 | VWUCAND | VWUCANM |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.50 | $0.40 | $0.28 |

### Tech Prep: The Success Option

The perfect handout at open houses, career nights and other recruitment events, this brochure is written in terms students understand. It spells out that tech prep means focus, applied learning, skills, college and success.

| **Quantity** | **100** | **500** | **1000** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $39 | $156 | $325 |
| Non-Member | $47 | $188 | $375 |
| Prod# | VWTPSTC | VWTPSTD | VWTPSTM |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.39 | $0.31 | $0.325 |

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# Get Your Career in Gear!

## FOR PARENTS

### A Parent's Guide to Tech Prep: A Pathway to Education and Career Success for Your Teenager

This brochure, aimed at parents, offers seven persuasive reasons why tech prep is an excellent option for students — from solid academics to valuable skills training, college credit and protection against career obsolescence. Buy in quantity and give one to every parent in your school or district.

| Quantity | 100 | 500 | 1000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $39 | $156 | $250 |
| Non-Member | $47 | $188 | $275 |
| Prod# | VWTPPAR | VWTPPAD | VWTPPAM |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.39 | $0.31 | $0.25 |

### 8 Facts Every Parent Should Know About Vocational Education

This extremely popular brochure should be a staple in every vocational-technical education recruitment campaign. Recently updated, it emphasizes that, when students blend academic and technical courses, they better understand how what they learn in school applies to their future careers. Keep large quantities in hand — they go fast!

| Quantity | 100 | 500 | 1000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $39 | $156 | $250 |
| Non-Member | $47 | $188 | $275 |
| Prod# | VW8F100 | VW8FACD | VW8FACM |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.39 | $0.31 | $0.25 |

### Preparing Your Teen for a Successful Career: 10 Tips for Parents

This brochure introduces parents to school-to-careers systems and gives them concrete advice on what they can do to help their teenagers make wise choices that will ultimately lead them to successful careers. Included are 10 "action tips" parents can use immediately to help their sons and daughters discover appropriate career paths. Buy enough to distribute to every parent in your school or district.

| Quantity | 100 | 500 | 1000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $39 | $156 | $250 |
| Non-Member | $47 | $188 | 275 |
| Prod# | VWSTWPA | VWSTWPD | VWSTWPM |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.39 | $0.31 | $0.25 |

## FOR BUSINESS

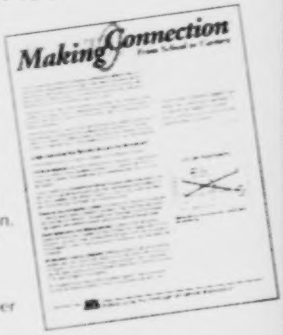
### School-To-Careers: Benefiting Employers Like You

Employers are key to the success of school-to-careers systems. This brochure tells business and industry why participating in school-to-careers programs is vital to their bottom line. Testimonials from executives at Proctor & Gamble, General Motors and BellSouth help drive home all the benefits of school-to-careers systems — how they give students first-hand knowledge of business and the skills, attitudes and habits they need to thrive in the workforce.

| Quantity | 100 | 500 | 1000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $39 | $156 | $250 |
| Non-Member | $47 | $188 | $275 |
| Prod# | VWSTWEC | VWSTWED | VWSTWEM |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.39 | $0.31 | $0.25 |

## VERSATILE GIVEAWAY

### Making the Connection: From School to Careers



This comprehensive, four-page fact sheet on what state-of-the-art career-preparation programs are all about — a staple of any school-to-careers promotional campaign — has been updated to reflect new trends in school-to-careers systems and integration of vocational-technical and academic education. Featuring compelling statistics and powerful statements from national leaders, this publication is ideal for community and business leaders, members of the media, other educators and parents.

| Quantity | 100 | 500 | 1000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Member | $39 | $156 | $250 |
| Non-Member | $47 | $188 | $275 |
| Prod# | VWFACTS | VWFACTD | VWFACTM |
| Unit Comparison* | $0.39 | $0.31 | $0.25 |

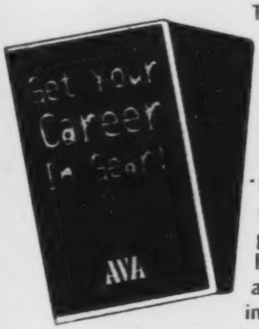
**The unit comparison* designation allows the purchaser to compare the unit price of the quantities offered at the member's price. Please order by quantities shown.**

# Get Your Promotional Efforts in Gear with These Super Videos from AVA!

## New Low Prices!

### ESPECIALLY FOR STUDENTS

**Get Your Career In Gear!**



This attention-grabbing video is short, hip and to the point — filmed in a fast-paced, MTV-style format that relies heavily on testimonials from real teenagers, not actors. In just eight minutes, students will learn a lot about the benefits of school-to-careers programs, career opportunities with great advancement potential, and how a strong grounding in both academic and vocational subjects is important to future success.

Accompanying the video is a complete presentation package that includes:

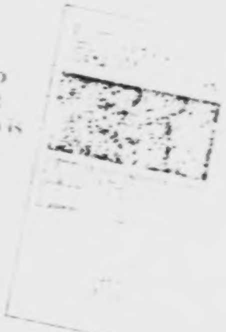
- A guide to help you get the most out of the video presentation;
- 50 Get Your Career in Gear! brochures for students;
- 50 Preparing Your Teen for a Successful Career: 10 Tips for Parents brochures;
- A tip sheet with answers to questions most frequently asked about school-to-careers by students and their parents; and
- 100 Get Your Career in Gear! stickers to afix to letterheads, folders and other material you prepare.

**AVA # CARVIPK $24.95 ($34.95 Non-Member)**

### FOR EMPLOYERS, PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY

**Learning to Work/Working to Learn**

This stimulating, fact-filled, 10-minute video is the perfect way to explain the school-to-careers movement to your PTA, school board and other business and community supporters. The school-to-careers message is delivered by students, educators and nationally recognized leaders such as President Clinton: Congressman William Goodling, chair of the House of Representatives' Committee on Economic Opportunities; and Jack Smith, CEO of General Motors; who challenge community leaders to get involved. Accompanying the video is a complete support package that includes:



- A step-by-step outline for planning and organizing your presentation, including a fact sheet and a list of frequently asked questions and suggested answers;
- 50 Preparing Your Teen for a Successful Career: 10 Tips for Parents brochures; and
- 50 School-to-Careers: Benefiting Employers Like You brochures.

**AVA # AVAVIPK $69.95 ($79.95 Non-Member)**

**Quantity discount schedule does not apply to these items.**

To order call AVA Product Sales at 1-800-826-9972

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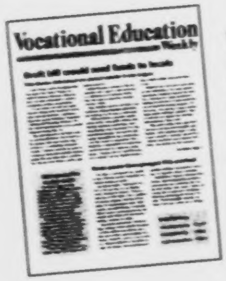
# Publications to help you work smarter...

**You've heard the expression, "Knowledge is power."**

**Gain that power with these periodicals designed to keep you fully informed on today's hot topics in education.**



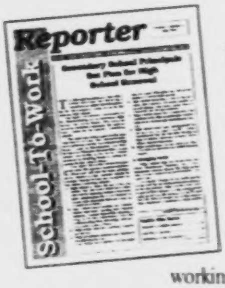
### Vocational Education Weekly

A concise four-page newsletter that puts you in the know about critical developments in Washington as they occur!

The *Weekly* is your personal pipeline to the U.S. Congress and the federal agencies involved in education policy. It's a quick 10-minute read that can clue you in on sources of educational funding, changes coming in program requirements, reports that measure voc ed's effectiveness, deadlines for government grant proposals.

**Subscription rates: One year (44 weekly issues) $179 (only $159 for AVA members).**

A supplement in every issue lists resource materials available quickly through AVA as well as "help wanted" ads.



### School-To-Work Reporter

A monthly 8- to 12-page newsletter covering the field of career-based education, with a special focus on school-to-work and tech prep. The *STW Reporter* provides information and analysis with strong emphasis on model programs, reviews of research, grant notices and lots of resource data—names, FAX and phone numbers and e-mail addresses where you can get more information.

The *STW Reporter* will help you stay ahead of the school-to-work curve. It brings you not just "news" about policies and issues, but how-to-do-it details about working programs and savvy tips about how to make your programs part of STW systems.

**Subscription rates: One year (12 issues) $188 (AVA members pay only $165).**

The *STW Reporter* is more than just a newsletter, it's a service for subscribers. When subscribers have questions about school-to-work, they call us. And our staff responds with information.

### Techniques: Making Education and Career Connections

A 4-color magazine chock full of graphics and photos. Feature articles and regular departments focus on education that prepares students for career and life success. The award-winning magazine's staff reports on a range of subjects vital to teachers, school administrators and business people who partner with educators.

Upcoming issues will feature valuable articles like these:

• Solutions for improving the image of career education. • Thought-provoking interviews with education experts, authors and other newsmakers. • How teachers and students can get the most out of educational technology. • Putting the latest learning theories into practice. • Why high-paying, high-tech jobs go unfilled. • The lowdown on alternative assessment • Do "zero tolerance" strategies work? • Labor's new tactics...and much more.

In the pages of *Techniques*, you'll hear the voices of teachers, administrators and counselors... business and industry managers who work with schools... students, parents and policymakers.

**Subscription rates: One year (8 issues) for $38 domestic; $76 to foreign addresses.**

Recognized for excellence by National EdPress and SNAP.

## 3 WAYS TO START YOUR SUBSCRIPTION TO THESE POWERFUL PERIODICALS TODAY!

**1. Call 800-826-9972 (extension 318) for credit card orders.**

**2. Fax a purchase order to 703-683-7424**

**3. Mail order with check or purchase order to:**

**AVA Publications, 1410 King St., Alexandria, VA 22314.**

# Other School-to-Careers books from AVA

**Powerful Partnerships: School-to-Careers Success Through Business and Education Cooperation**
This step-by-step guide shows you how to turn all the talk about
partnerships between education and business into reality. 1996, 235 pages.
AVA #PARTNER $59

**Successful Strategies: Building a School-to-Careers System**
Featuring 31 educators recounting their system-building achievements. 1995, 377 pages.
AVA #SUSTRAS $79

**School-to-Careers: Legal and Labor Responsibilities**
*By Alice Potosky*
What you need to know to ensure compliance with applicable laws
and provide meaningful opportunities for students, worksite mentors, educators and
employers. AVA #STCLEGL $27.95

**Helping Students Plan Careers: A School-to-Careers Guide for Counselors**
*By Nancy Perry & Laura Ward*
How counselors can advance school-to-careers education by helping students relate
what they're learning in school to career pathways. AVA #HELPING $38.95

**To order, call AVA Product Sales toll-free at 800-826-9972**

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☐ **This order is a confirmation of a telephone order.**

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Note: You must include your membership number to be eligible for the membership price.

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* If you are tax exempt, you must provide a copy of your tax exemption letter.

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### 3 Ways to Order

**1. Phone.** Call 1-800-826-9972. Credit card orders can be taken by phone.

**2. FAX.** Fax a purchase order to 1-703-683-7424

**3. Mail.** Mail your order form with check or purchase order to

AVA Product Sales
1410 King Street
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☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover

Expiration Date

Card #

Signature

**About Telephone or Fax Orders**

Please help us avoid duplicate shipments. If you must send a confirming purchase order for a phone order, please check box above marked "confirmation of phone order."

## NOTES

**For more information about school-to-careers and vocational-technical education, contact the American Vocational Association at 800-826-9972. Or visit the AVA at www.avaonline.org. Or look on page 106 inside for resources available through AVA's Product Sales Department.**

AVA

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